Historical Racial Theories:

Ongoing Racialization in Saskatchewan

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By Carmen Baker

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, theories of race contributed to the justification and authorization of global European imperialism and the colonization of indigenous people. In Canada, racial theories influenced perceptions of each citizen as either superior or inferior. Although European and American theorists constructed hundreds of ideas about race, there are several key ideas that continue to linger in the minds of Canadians. This thesis examines the socio-ideological context of racial theories and provides an historical account of the construction of race. The historical account highlights four prominent ideas: white superiority, non-white inferiority (marked by low intelligence levels), the belief in *inherent* racial characteristics, and racial purity and contamination. In Saskatchewan, these ideas continue to surface in discourse about Aboriginal people and relations between the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal population. Although constructed ideas about race are scientifically unsound and grounded in the belief in white superiority, these ideas are often normalized as common sense and not easily recognized as constructed. Discourse and practices that appear to be emancipatory for Aboriginal people but rely on constructed ideas about race need to be re-examined. This thesis provides several examples of where these ideas surface in Saskatchewan discourse and recommends anti-racist education as an alternative.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my grandparents Anne Hall and Mah Hee.
You are always in my heart.

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INTRODUCTION

Prologue

In 1999 I came across a book entitled *Racial Theories* by Michael Banton. On the first page Banton (1998) argues, "To speak of people as mixed raced implies that there are pure races, a notion known for a century to have no scientific justification" (p.1). I remember sitting on my bed, reading this statement, and thinking, 'what?' I had never thought of the possibility that race does not exist. If race does not exist, why are people racist? What is racism? What does 'Race Relations' mean? Questions about racism had always been at the forefront of my mind because of my ancestry and because I live in Saskatoon, a place where it is not easy to escape racism directed towards everything and everyone defined as Aboriginal.[1] Now, years later, what I have come to find strikingly odd about being a Canadian is our incredible capacity to demonize racism without ever challenging ourselves to understand how we may be complicit with racism.

Although I did not know it at the time, the idea for this thesis began while I was working on my Native Studies degree. I enjoyed taking Native Studies classes and learned a tremendous amount about Aboriginal history and contemporary issues while in the program. But I ran into two obstacles that led to my interest in anti-

[1] I use the term Aboriginal to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Canada as recognized in Section 35(2) of the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982. I acknowledge the term is controversial (see Alfred, 2005, p.23). However, I choose to use Aboriginal because the majority of Canadians commonly use the term.

racist education. First, I noticed that some students in the program continued to perpetuate racist ideas about Indigenous[2] peoples, in spite of the history they were taught. They possessed a 'get over the past' mentality and were not able to see the linkages between the past and present.

The second problem I encountered was in terms of my own identity. I was finally able to identify as Métis because of the support and guidance of some of my professors but I knew I remained three quarters non-Aboriginal as well (my mother's parents are Norwegian and my father's mother was Métis and father was Chinese). I therefore felt pressure to identify racially with one side of the prevalent racial binary in Saskatchewan, as Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. I left the program confused about my identity partly because I continued to associate race with ancestry – even though I knew race did not exist.

This problem did not end when I began graduate school. Although numerous authors of anti-racist education literature often argue that race is a construct, they also say we must work with the term because beliefs in race continue to hold political, social, and economic power. Again, I was asked to choose a side, to identify as the oppressor or the oppressed. However, because anti-racist educators emphasize the recognition of white privilege and my skin is not dark (and I have blue eyes), I felt more compelled to identify as the oppressor than the oppressed. This choice also left me feeling anxious at times. There can be a tremendous amount of guilt, shame, denial, and grief that must be worked through when first identifying as an oppressor. While this was not the first time I had felt guilt about identifying as an oppressor, the

[2] I use the term Indigenous and Aboriginal interchangeably throughout the thesis. However, the term Indigenous commonly connotes an international context while the term Aboriginal is specifically used in Canada.

process of admitting to the ways in which I benefit from and am therefore complicit with racism is ongoing. However, it has never been difficult for me to accept that people with white skin privilege in Saskatoon because I grew up knowing that I receive better service than my father, who has dark skin. The second reason I felt anxiety is because although I experience privilege and benefit from society because I look white, racism affects me psychologically because I am Métis and Chinese. I felt that the pressure to chose a side negates the affects of racism on those of us who are labelled 'mixed-raced' and perhaps can pass as white.

My confusion led me to develop a reading course with my supervisor. She introduced me to post-colonial analyses of hybridity (racial mixture), identity, and power. But I soon realized that to understand the relationship between maintaining power in colonized territories and the concept of 'hybridity,' I first had to expand my understanding of the historical construction of race. Although I was taught that race is a construction in my graduate courses, we did not examine the historical construction of race in extensive detail due to limited class time and the interests of the professors. I began to read about historical racial theories (the original theories produced to define and explain race) to extend my knowledge base about the construction of race.

As mentioned previously, numerous anti-racist scholars explain that race is a construction, but also argue that beliefs in race are constantly reinvented and reified to preserve the power of the dominant society. As Omi and Winant (1986) argue, "The effort must be made to understand race as *an unstable and "de-centered" complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle*"

(p.68). Although race is a *construction*, beliefs in race have existed for centuries and continue to contribute to the authorization of very *real* material and psychological consequences in the lives of individuals, communities and nations. Roediger (1994) explains:

> A telling joke that has made the rounds among African American scholars' comments on the distance between academic trends in writing on race and life in the real world. 'I have noticed' the joke laments that my research demonstrating race is merely a social and ideological construction helps little in getting taxis to pick me up at night.' (p.1)

Why does the colour of an individual's skin determine the type of customer service he or she will receive? If we believe in the humanity of all people and in equality, skin colour should not determine access to power. But it does; skin colour does matter. Although race is an obscure construction that makes little sense, especially when the wide spectrum of diverse human physical characteristics is acknowledged, it is a construct society has believed in for centuries. As such, the confusion I experience because I am called 'mixed raced' is a direct result of the obscurity of beliefs in race. The argument that race is a construct and therefore does not exist is not enough to challenge racism. Rather, to challenge racism, deeply engrained beliefs in race, which contribute to racist ideology, must continually be exposed as they re-emerge in contemporary discourse and practices.

Intention of the Study

To better recognize the contemporary beliefs in race that continue to justify and authorize racism and inequality in Saskatchewan, it is useful to examine the historical construction of race. The original ideas that authorize contemporary beliefs

in ‘race’ can be located in the work of historical racial theorists. I intend to provide a simplified but concise examination of the contradictory and complex history of ‘race’ in an accessible format. Throughout Parts One and Two, I identify four key ideas constructed about race. In Part Three, I examine discourse often heard in Saskatchewan that relies on and reinforces the beliefs about race I identified in Parts One and Two. This discourse attempts to offer strategies to address the disparity between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Saskatchewan.

My thesis asks the following questions:

1. What is race? Who constructed race and what were the key ideas?
2. How do these ideas play out today in explanations and solutions for inequality that purport to be emancipatory for Aboriginal people?
3. How can anti-racist education work to challenge constructed beliefs in race?

As mentioned, I examine the discourse that is often offered as explanations and solutions for inequality and discourse intended to empower Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. In Foucault’s theory of discourse, discourse is presented as a system of representation that gives meaning to a specific topic (1980). Drawing from Foucault, Hall (2001) explains that discourse is “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (p.72). Discourse is the production of knowledge and meaning of a certain topic through language, which influences and authorizes the ways in which ideas are put into practice. Discourse regulates social systems, produces subjects or identities and is directly related to power. I refer to common statements to demonstrate the discourse in Part three. These statements are

employed across a wide range of social and institutional contexts in Saskatchewan, in written texts and everyday conversations. Similar to Foucault's notion of 'discursive formations,' the statements "refer to the same object, share the same style and support a strategy, a common institutional, administrative or political drift or pattern" (p.73).

This thesis revolves around the concept of 'theory.' The term racial 'theory' refers to the body of ideas and beliefs used to describe and explain differences in human physical appearance during the time that Canada was colonized by the British and the prairies were settled primarily by western Europeans. The ideas and beliefs about race that were used to explain human difference became embedded in racial theory and mainstream discourse and served to justify the oppression of various populations. These beliefs are still in circulation today, although not consciously linked to racial theories. However, by focussing attention on how racial theory historically gave credence to these false beliefs, it becomes easier to recognize where these arbitrary but not so innocent ideas continue to manifest today and serve to privilege specific populations.

The concept of theory is also important to this thesis because it is a 'theoretical' analysis. My ideas are based on what I have read, thought about, experienced and observed. I use theory to search for explanations for the ideological conflicts I experienced after finishing my Native Studies degree and when I struggled with the idea that race is a construct. I have also turned to theory in this thesis to understand and consider the implications of relying on a construct, originally produced to authorize the oppression of a population, to emancipate marginalized populations. Theory can provide possible alternatives to situations that seem

hopeless. Hooks (1994) explains, "Theory is not inherently healing, liberatory or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing to this end" (p. 61).

Race, Racialization and Racism

Beliefs in the inferiority or superiority of populations due to skin colour or physical difference existed long before race was historically constructed. Historical racial theorists of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not necessarily 'construct' new ideas about difference. In many ways, these theorists merely put popular ideas about difference onto paper, giving quantitative and scientific evidence to support the belief that 'primitive' societies are inherently inferior. Nevertheless, 'race' as it has come to be known today did not exist before human populations were categorized and labelled as biologically racially different.

The majority of contemporary scholars and scientists who examine human differences dismiss the assertion that there are biological racial divisions between humans as both erroneous and dangerous (Castagna and Dei, 2000). However, Fenton (1999) explains, "A discourse of race survives even though the central term race is discredited, as are the ideas associated with it. It survives most potently in those societies where the racialization of attitudes, beliefs, practices and social institutions became and remain most firmly embedded – above all South Africa and the USA" (p.61). Canada is not an exception.

Omi and Winant (1986) provide a useful definition of racialization. They say, "We employ the term racialization to signify the extension of racial meaning to a

previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group. Racialization is an ideological process, an historically specific one" (p.64). For example, ascribing specific traits to people according to skin colour is a process of racialization. Individuals can be racialized into various categories including 'white,' 'black,' or 'mixed' – each with a set of assumptions about the racialized category. 'Racialization' is grounded in historically constructed theories of race and denotes superiority or inferiority. Racialization can also occur in terms of religious, national, economic and political difference. Historical examples include the racialization of Jewish, Irish and Eastern European immigrants, and poor populations. Each group has at one time been described with the same traits ascribed to non-white populations in racial theories – the theories that produced what is now known as race.

Edgar and Sedgwick (2002) define race as, "A mode of classification of human beings which distinguishes between them on the basis of physical properties (e.g. skin colour, facial features) which purportedly derive from genetic inheritance" (p.323). In this mode of classification, first constructed in the eighteenth century, humans can be divided into a hierarchy of several races, each primarily determined by skin colour (usually white, red, yellow and black). Each race is categorized as separate from the others and described with various traits. Racial theories are the body of theories primarily constructed by European and American men in the attempt to explain 'race' and will be discussed in more detail in Part Two of the thesis.

Racial theories provide the foundation for what is commonly referred to as *racism* in contemporary society (Edgar and Sedgwick, 2002). Racism is used as a

strategy to maintain power. According to the *Canadian Race Relations Foundation* racism is:

> A mix of prejudice and power leading to domination and exploitation of one group (the dominant or majority group) over another (the non-dominant, minority or racialized group). It asserts that the one group is supreme and superior while the other is inferior. Racism is any individual action, or institutional practice backed by institutional power, which subordinates people because of their colour or ethnicity. (2005)

Henry et al. (2000) explain, "Racist discourse, or the discourse of racism, advances the interests of Whites. It has an identifiable repertoire of words, images and practices through which racial power is directed against minorities" (p.46). They further explain:

> Racist discourse includes the idea that human beings can be hierarchically classified according to their intellectual and physical abilities; that people can exclude, disrespect, and dominate those whom they consider inferior to themselves; and that institutional regulations and practices can restrict equal access to education, employment and other benefits of society. Racialized discourse is expressed in many ways but all serve to support patterns of domination, exclusion and marginalization. (p.47)

Racism is not only a result of ignorance. Racism is always associated with the preservation and enactment of power.

Miles (1989) argues that racism has become an ideology that informs the practices, attitudes, beliefs, policies and discourse that exist to subordinate a specific group of people to maintain white supremacy. Racist ideology, as derived from the historical ideas constructed about race, informs and authorizes *racism*. According to Edgar and Sedgwick (2002), "A racist ideology, therefore, is constructed on the basis of hierarchical distinctions drawn between different groups of people. From the point of view of such ideologies, race is taken to be a more fundamental basis for the social

differentiation between individuals and groups, than, for example, that of class" (p.325). What is pivotal to Edgar and Sedgwick's description of racist ideology is the idea that, within racist ideology, *race* is perceived as *the reason* for social inequality, rather than oppression. In other words, the belief that inequality is a result of racial difference or racial inferiority (i.e. low intelligence levels) dismisses the role oppressive practices and processes play in maintaining inequality.

Anti-Racist Education

There is a lack of awareness about what racism is, why it exists, and what it accomplishes. Numerous educators in Saskatchewan have pointed to the need for anti-racist education (St. Denis, 2004; Schick, 2000; Green, 2005). Dei (1996) provides a broad and useful definition of anti-racist education:

> Anti-racism education is an action-orientated strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and the interlocking system of social oppression. Anti-racism is a critical discourse of race and racism in society and of the continuing racialization of social groups for differential and unequal treatment. Anti-racism explicitly names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equity rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety. A critical anti-racism discursive framework seeks a broad definition of race and racism that extends beyond the view that skin colour is the only signifier of difference. (p.25)

As previously explained, racism is always associated with the ability to acquire, maintain, and exercise dominant power. A challenging aspect for those who occupy positions of racial dominance is naming the issues of race and social difference as 'issues as power and equity.' A power relation analysis of racism requires more than merely feeling empathy and sympathy for 'victims,' but also involves personal reflection and analysis on the part of those who benefit from

racism. Individuals often experience the pain of guilt, anger and depression when they realize the ways in which they are complicit with racism, particularly once the recognition of white privilege, and how it is maintained as normal, occurs. Kumashiro (2000) argues, "…while such efforts [creating empathy] do help the other, they do not bring about structural and systemic change, they do not change the norm and thus, they do not disrupt the process that differentiates the other from the Normal" (p.35). Disrupting the norm, especially for those who benefit from the norm, can be painful and uncomfortable. This pain and discomfort can lead individuals to deny that racism exists or is a problem that leads to inequality (hooks, 1994; Larouqe, 1991; St. Denis and Schick, 2003; Boler & Zembylas, 2003).

St. Denis and Hampton (2002) describe the systemic nature of the denial of racism:

> In summary, the literature identifies and names the denial of racism as a problem. It is not only institutions that deny and therefore avoid the topic of racism, but also individuals within those institutions who deny the problem of racism and this denial occurs both in Canada and the United States. Ironically, those who must bear the effects of racism and white supremacy may also deny and/or avoid the problem of racism; for example, Aboriginal and or American Indian denial of the problem of racism occurs both at the individual and institutional level. (p. 9-10)

A factor that contributes to the denial of racism is the belief that racism is natural (Omi and Winant, 1993; Blum, 2002; Hannaford, 1996). Because scientific ideas of race have been used to describe differences between populations of people for nearly three centuries, it is difficult to comprehend that race is a social construct that has been utilized to maintain dominant power.

To comprehend that race is a construction is almost impossible. It requires imagining a world without race, which would be similar to imagining a world without gender. Yet it is difficult to challenge racism without attempting to recognize the false beliefs historically constructed about race, which continue to contribute to racism. The fact that race is a social construct often falls upon deaf ears because of the implications ideas about race have in our everyday lives, especially in terms of our own racialized identities. To challenge racism, we must challenge ideas about race, but in the process we challenge who we are – or how we have been taught to identify. An examination of historical racial theories assists with the process of deconstructed ideas about race because the examination allows individuals the opportunity to 'see' the obscurity and fragile artificiality of ideas about race. This recognition can assist in identifying the reproduction of racist ideology in contemporary discourse and practice, which provides an opportunity to examine alternative discourses and practices, such as those supported by anti-racist education.

Common Sense Racism

Racist ideology is often normalized as common sense and therefore difficult to recognize. According to Edgar and Sedgwick (2002), "Marx's approach to ideology may be introduced through the famous observation that, for any society, the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas. This is to suggest that our understanding and knowledge of the world (and especially if not exclusively, of the social world) is determined by political interests" (p.189-190). Althusser (2001) explains, "Here, ideology is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a

man or social group" (p.106 – 107). In this sense, the ruling elite constructs and implements popular ideologies that are not questioned by the mainstream and therefore become 'common sense.'

The theory of hegemony is important to this thesis because it conceptualizes how oppressive ideologies, such as racism, become normalized and 'taken for granted' or 'common sense.' According to Gramsci (1971), hegemony is:

> The spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence), which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (p.12)

Gramsci argued that *public consent* rather than (or in addition to) violent domination (such as military or police force) authorises oppressive ideologies such as racism.

Post-structural scholars expand on Gramsci's theory of hegemony to explain that oppression is often authorized through the institutional production of identities (Lee and Lutz, 2005). Institutional systems such as education, justice, health care, organized religion, and government contribute to the production and reproduction of knowledge about specific populations of people. Institutions often determine who has access to power by describing and ascribing identity. Lee and Lutz (2005) explain, "Because knowledge is linked to power, and in turn, linked to the production of subjectivities and consciousness, the way we talk and think about subjects helps to produce and maintain inequality" (p.5). Racial theories, which inform racist ideology, continue to influence perceptions of the worth of human beings. False ideas about race become common sense when they are subtly hidden in Eurocentric

knowledge and not recognized, recognized but left unquestioned within institutional, public and private discourse, or are blatantly believed.

Rationale for the Study

Although it is difficult to provide quantitative evidence, it is recognized at a provincial, national and international level that Aboriginal women, youth and men in Saskatchewan experience racism, often on a daily basis. It has also been argued that Aboriginal women experience the effects of discrimination to a greater degree than Aboriginal men because of the combination of racism and sexism (Amnesty International, 2004). The *City of Saskatoon – Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Office Final Report* (City of Saskatoon, 2006) reports that 70% of 500 Saskatoon citizens have witnessed discrimination directed towards Aboriginal people (p.16).

According to an article in *The Globe and Mail*, "racism is an issue of profound significance in this province [Saskatchewan] and increasingly so as the Aboriginal people become even more visible and more involved in the provincial economy" (MacGregor, 2004). Although racism is directed towards other non-white people in Saskatchewan, Schick and St. Denis (2005) explain that Aboriginal peoples are the primary targets of racism in the province because:

> [t]he comparatively small amount of in migration to Saskatchewan has produced a stable population of mainly third and fourth generation families of European descent. The presumed stability of a white population serves dominant discourses that marginalize indigenous land claims. The largest population produced as "Other" are First Nations peoples. In this Canadian prairie context, Aboriginal peoples form the greatest critical mass to challenge normative practices of a dominant white culture. The "other" is typically understood to be Aboriginal peoples, even though other visible minority groups also make the area their home. (p.297)

While there is little debate about the existence of 'racial tensions' in Saskatchewan, the construction of race as a means to maintain white European power is usually omitted from the debate. In Saskatchewan, racism "is not seen as an institution that gives one group of Canadians social advantage and economic benefits over other groups in society," to "justify the seizure of land from the indigenous people by force and threat of force" but as something that occurs between individuals, most often a result of cultural misunderstandings (Warnock, 2004, p.151).

The effects of racist ideology on Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan are appalling. Warnock (2004) provides several examples but the list is ongoing. Racist ideas about Aboriginal people affect every public and private sphere within Saskatchewan:

> Around seventy-five percent of young Aboriginal people do not graduate from high school. Ninety percent of the women in prison in Saskatchewan are Aboriginal and seventy-five percent of the men. Saskatchewan has the highest amount of youth incarceration in Canada and ninety percent of those in custody are Aboriginal. Saskatchewan has the highest infant mortality rate of any province, and this is due to the high rate in Northern Saskatchewan, where Aboriginal people are the majority. (p. 153)

However, denials of racism allow society to believe that Aboriginal peoples occupy these socio-economic positions because of an inability to work hard or conform to the mainstream. The false belief that those who work hard will succeed, in spite of the barriers they may encounter, is often referred to as 'meritocracy.' The belief in meritocracy informs and supports common sense racism, a racism that places blame on Aboriginal peoples for often occupying low socio-economic positions in Saskatchewan. As such, beliefs in meritocracy simultaneously justify and authorize

ongoing forms of colonialism and white privilege by perpetuating the myth that those who hold power do so because they 'work hard.' This false assumption ignores and often dismisses systemic racism as a barrier to political, social, and economic power in Saskatchewan.

Literature Consulted

This thesis explores how racial theories continue to influence racist ideology in Saskatchewan through textual analyses of three broad and interrelated areas of scholarship: anti-racist education and white privilege studies; post-colonial and feminist analyses; and the history of the race concept and racial theories. Scholars who have studied these areas extensively, as well as primary sources relevant to my discussion, are consulted. In Part Three, I also draw from personal experiences as a teacher, student and Saskatchewan citizen.

Several studies on anti-racist education and white privilege were instrumental to the development of this thesis. Scholars of anti-racist education literature provided me with the language to articulate what racism is and how it is normalized as common sense in contemporary Saskatchewan. Scholars such as Dei (1996), hooks (1994), Blum (2002), Kivel (2000), Bishop (1994), Kumashiro (2000), Wetherell and Potter (1992), St. Denis and Schick (2003), Ng (1993) provide insightful analyses of how racism is linked to power and the erasure of historical injustices. These authors often describe various means to address racism and address the challenges of such a venture. Anti-racist scholars do not only focus on racial discrimination but also point to the intersection between gender, class, sexuality, ability, and often religious

affiliation as constructed categories used to define, objectify and subordinate specific populations to maintain dominant power structures.

Norquay (1993), Frankenburg (1993), MacIntosh (1988), Thomas (1994), Schick (2000), Dyer (1997), and Sleeter (1993) among others discuss how whiteness or white privilege is normalized as common sense in racist societies to preserve notions of white superiority. Studies on whiteness are crucial to anti-racist education as they point to how whiteness has become normalized as superior through to the racialization of dark skinned peoples as inferior. These studies often address the difficulties people racialized as white have in coming to terms with their complicity with racism and offer strategies to deal with feelings of shame, guilt, anger, resentment or denial in order to work towards becoming an ally of the oppressed.

My analysis of racial theories is informed by post-colonial and feminist theory. Ideas drawn from post-colonial theorists McClintock (1995), Stoler (2002) and Young (1995) greatly influence my understanding of hybridity and the relationship between gender and race in colonized territories. These authors focus primarily on hybridity (the consequences of racial mixture) and how this mixture challenges colonial power structures based on race. I first turned to their scholarship because of my own 'mixed raced' identity. However, their analyses are fundamental to my thesis because they directed me to question and read about the historical construction of race. In order to understand notions of hybridity, I first needed to examine the construction of race.

Lerner (1997), Relke (1999), and Johnson (1997) provided the most useful descriptions of patriarchy in terms of understanding colonialism. Although they do

not discuss colonialism or race extensively, the authors' analyses of patriarchies in terms of highlighting patriarchal traditions such as maintaining rights to private property and the construction of masculinity as superior to femininity are extremely useful. I was able to make connections, with the aid of post-colonial theories of gender and race, between the function of race in colonized societies and the authors' description of the role gender plays in patriarchies.

My interest in the connections between hybridity, patriarchy and colonialism led me to examine racial theories and the history of race. Hannaford (1996), Smedley (1999), Willinsky (1998), Malik (1996), Banton (1977 &1998) and, Gould (1996) provide thorough examinations of racial theories and the history of race. Smedley, Willinsky, and Dickason (1997) extend these analyses to write about how race works to justify the subordination of Indigenous people in colonized territories. Of the scholars in this field of study that I examine, most ignore how racial theories constructed women, accounted for racial mixture or contribute to contemporary racist ideology. However, Smedley and Gould explain that women were always ascribed with lower intelligence levels than men in racial theories and Fredrickson (2002), Miles (1993, 1989), Dickason (1997) and Goldberg (1993) discuss various aspects of the history of race that assist in understanding how racism manifests and evolves throughout time.

The literature I examine draws from an extensive collection of original work by racial theorists to examine the construction of race and contemporary implications. None of the scholars subscribe to biological definitions of race and instead seek to disrupt the meaning of race through highlighting the contradictions within the theory.

I was able to identify key ideas historically constructed about race which the authors highlight in the texts. These texts also gave me in-depth descriptions of the historical, social and ideological context in which race was constructed. Several primary sources were consulted to substantiate and verify claims made in the texts I analyzed. In particular I draw from Blumenbach, Darwin and Gobineau.

Summary of Parts

In Part One I discuss several historical ideas and the material context that contributed to the construction of racial theories. I demonstrate each historical idea by providing an analysis of one of the ideological strands from which it developed. Topics discussed include patriarchy and the construction of the 'Other' as inferior; colonialism and the belief in European superiority; the Enlightenment and the paradoxical belief in human equality and inherent human differences; and Christianity's contribution to environmentalism and the connection between physical appearance, intelligence and human worth. Although the ideologies of patriarchy, colonialism, the Enlightenment and Christianity are interconnected, as too are the ideas highlighted within the ideologies, I identify one salient idea from each ideological strand that directly contributed to the production of race to make clear distinctions between and bring attention to the separate ideas.

Part Two provides a description of racial theories from the end of the eighteenth century to the de-legitimization of various Eugenics movements after the Second World War. I examine the construction of race in an historical linear progression beginning with the idea that humans can be classified into categories

based on skin color and other physical characteristics. These categories were placed into a hierarchy, which opened the doors for a multitude of different 'races' to be described and elaborated upon primarily by elite white Christian European and American men who are now referred to as racial theorists. I discuss several ideas constructed about race, at various points throughout part two, that work to ensure white privilege in colonized territories: non-Caucasian inherent inferiority, Caucasian superiority, inherent racial differences, racial purity and racial contamination.

In Part Three, I argue that remnants of the key ideas identified in Part Two continue to influence the ideologies which support prominent strategic themes often utilized in Saskatchewan to address inequality between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. I first explain that the belief in Caucasian superiority is often normalized as common sense and has become an unquestioned assumption. 'Historical myths' perpetuate the belief in Caucasian or white superiority and will be discussed. I then explain how beliefs in non-Caucasian inferiority, inherent racial traits and racial purity influence current strategies in Saskatchewan that seek to empower Aboriginal people. I provide several statements that are commonly heard in Saskatchewan to demonstrate the discourse that reinforces each belief. The conclusion will emphasize why strategies that rely on historically constructed beliefs in race cannot empower Aboriginal people or work towards social justice alone and recommend anti-racist education as an addition to contemporary strategies.

PART ONE

The Historical & Ideological Context of Racial Theorists

The numerous circumstances that led to the production of racial theories are complex, inter-related and often contradictory. Part One provides brief descriptions of the salient ideas from several ideological currents that directly contributed to the context that produced historical racial theories. Racial theories emerged simultaneously with the global expansion of European imperialism and colonization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because the nations that engaged in imperialism were patriarchal, I discuss patriarchy and a key element that contributed to racial theory: the construction of women and 'Others' as inferior. I also discuss imperialism and colonization as ideology that produced and strengthened beliefs in European superiority. Elements of Enlightenment philosophy that enhanced the paradoxical principle of meritocracy and debates within Christianity that shaped understandings of racial difference and purity are highlighted.

1.1 Patriarchy

Lerner (1986) argues that while there is no consensus on the origin of patriarchies, there is evidence of their existence for over five thousand years (p.239). Relke (1999) explains that patriarchies emerged simultaneously with the development of civilizations somewhere around 3000 BCE, citing the Babylonian creation story

Enuma Elish. She argues that 'western civilizations' have always been patriarchal and characterized as male dominated, with literacy systems, militarism, the division of labor by gender, the feminization of nature, and the creation of nation states or private property" (p.13). The connection between patriarchies and civilization is integral to understanding how contemporary forms of oppression are authorized.

To justify patriarchies, patriarchal elites categorize populations of people as 'Other' and themselves as the 'norm.' Lerner (1997) explains:

> Among equals there is no category of Otherness. The very act of categorizing another implies oppression. The one who does the categorizing sets himself up as the norm, the defining subject, while the one being categorized becomes deviant from the norm, the defined object. Being so defined forces one to take a position, to assert or deny who one is. (p.1)

Historically in western patriarchies, traits ascribed to categories associated with civility connote superiority, those with primitiveness, inferiority. Central to all descriptions of the 'Other' is the assumption that the other lacks intelligence and the ability to efficiently govern according to 'man-made' laws. Fundamental patriarchal traditions such as the intergenerational transfer of rights to private property from father to son and the control of women's sexual activities and fertility as a result of men's dependency on women to give birth to biological heirs, are supported through constructions of women as inferior to men.

Lerner (1986) and Relke (1999) argue that there is evidence of misogyny, the hatred of women, since the inception of patriarchies and civilizations five thousand years ago. Patriarchy, civilization and misogyny work together to justify the construction of women as the eternal 'Other.' Drawing from studies of misogynist cultures throughout the globe, Gilmore (2001) explains that misogyny is "…a sexual

prejudice that is symbolically exchanged (shared) among men, attaining praxis. It is something that is manifest in the ways people relate to each other. It is, of course, specifically acted out in society by males, often in ritualistic ways" (p.9). Although there is no definitive explanation for misogyny, misogynist ideology gives men permission to use physical and verbal violence to exploit and control women. The language used to describe women as inferior to men is integral to misogyny.

Permission to control women in patriarchies is granted through the traits used to describe women as inferior. Common descriptions of women in patriarchies include but are not limited to the following: weak, irrational, dependent and imitative. Descriptions of women as opposite to descriptions of men, who are described as rational, strong and progressive, justifies the entitlement of men to power in civilized societies because of the worth ascribed to each opposing category. However, as will be discussed, throughout history the polarization of gender attributes increased. The binary opposition of gender did not always exist in the form we now recognize.

There is a long tradition of comparing marginalized populations to women and central to these descriptions is a lack of intelligence and a presumed inability to govern. Describing the 'Other' with traits associated with women is common in patriarchies because it creates the common sense notion that 'feminine' populations need assistance or can be subordinated due to their inferiority. The Greeks used similar language to describe women and foreigners/barbarians as inferior. Hannaford (1996), an historian of racial theory, explains that Greek philosophers ascribed foreigners with the inability to use reason, in comparison to Greeks, "The barbarous [foreigners] state and the political [civilized] state are distinguished on the basis of

their capacity to exercise reason in the pursuit of human excellence beyond the limitations set by the declared judgment of the forebears or the customs and laws of the primitive society" (p.21).

Greek philosophers also argued that foreigners possessed an inability to efficiently govern territory due to their low intelligence levels in comparison to civilized men. Hannaford (1996) explains that according to the Greeks, barbarians and women both lived "according to nature (*phyesis*), rather than man-made laws (*nomos*)" (p.22). For example, in *On The Generation of Animals* (350 BC), Aristotle argued:

> But among the barbarians, the female and slave have the same position as the man; and the reason is that these nations do not possess the natural ruling element, but, their association instead becomes that of slave woman and slave man: and on this account the poets say, 'It is proper that Greeks should rule over barbarians.' (1994, p. 29)

The passage is interesting for a variety of reasons. Aristotle defines civilized societies as only those where men hold the majority of power. Those who live in egalitarian societies where men and women share power are perceived as primitive and therefore inferior to civilized societies. He also argues that because primitive societies are egalitarian, primitive men (as with all women), lack the natural ability to govern. Aristotle's comparison between barbarians and women produces models of non-Greek government as inferior.

Before the construction of race, perceptions of the 'Other' did differ from descriptions of women in that foreign men were not described as *inherently* inferior. To the Greeks, barbarian males were perceived as humans who had the capacity to become like Greek/civilized males. Miles (1989), who writes extensively about the

construction of race and racism, contends, "The barbarian other was seen to lack the capacities of intelligible speech and reason, capacities that were considered to be the quintessence of Greco-Roman culture, even though they were recognized as human beings" (p.14).

Until the nineteenth century, women were perceived as degenerate versions of men, an idea put forth by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. The designation of men and women as binary biological opposites is a relatively new phenomenon that materialized in Victorian England in the mid-nineteenth century (Poovey, 1988, p.8-9). However, the ascription of more worth and value to the traits associated with men rather than women ensures the maintenance of patriarchies more so than the division of gender as opposites. The belief in women's inferiority justifies the oppression of women. Mitchinson (1991) explains that descriptions of women as inferior to men in late nineteenth century Canada worked to define the roles women should play in society:

> Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, Canadians were inundated with powerful and at times maudlin descriptions of the concept of sexual separation at every level – intellectual, physical, moral and emotional. What is fascinating about this deluge is that its real focus was not the respective characteristics of men and women but rather the proper role and place of women in society. (p.15)

Kolmar and Bartkowski explain that several feminist scholars argue that gender is constructed through language as either feminine or masculine (2005, p. 47) . In line with Mitchinson's argument, gendered identities are described with specific

traits and characteristics that serve the changing needs of patriarchal societies. Johnson (1997) explains, "In the simplest sense, masculinity and femininity are cultural ideas about who men and women are and who they're supposed to be, typically expressed in personality traits that portray woman and men as 'opposite sexes'" (p.61).

In patriarchies, gendered identities are also ascribed to define differences between the 'Other' and the dominant society. Descriptions of the 'Other' with feminine traits can be found throughout western discourse. Within Christianity, femininity is historically associated with descriptions of Jews (Relke, 2001). Relke explains:

> In the minds of Christian Europeans, Jewish men were not constructed simply as an inferior version of Christian masculinity. Jewish men were a version of femininity. Indeed, for many centuries, Christians believed that Jewish men menstruated…These Christian images of Jews are both anti-Semitic and misogynist – and anti-Semitism and misogyny are two essential ingredients of modern racism. (p.4)

Although descriptions of femininity and masculinity are often explicitly associated with the binary of gender, they are also used to describe binary constructed categories such as race. Greenwell (2002) draws from McClintock to describe how non-white men have historically been feminized. She says, "McClintock argues that colonial discourse subtly feminized non-White men by using the language of gender to mediate the hierarchies of race" (27).

Contemporary definitions of patriarchies focus primarily on inequitable distributions of power between men and women. Allen Johnson (1997) explains:

> A society is patriarchal to the degree that it is *male-dominated, male-identified,* and *male-centered*. It also involves as one of its key aspects the oppression of women. Patriarchy is *male-dominated* in that positions of authority – political, economic, legal, religious, educational, military, domestic – are generally reserved for men…Patriarchal societies are *male-identified* in that core cultural ideas about what is considered good, desirable, preferable, or normal are associated with how we think about men and masculinity… In addition to being male dominated and male identified, patriarchy is *male-centered*, which means that the focus of attention is primarily on men and what they do. (p.5-8)

As Johnson articulates, men hold the majority of power within economic, political and social spheres in patriarchies as a result of their perceived superiority. However, while it is true that patriarchies privilege men, not all men are perceived as superior to women, nor do all men benefit economically or politically to the same degree. The norms of dominant masculinity reflect the experience of white elite men. Political and economic power maintained in western patriarchies is limited to a select group of individuals who fit appropriate categories that deem them superior, most often through family lineage and adherence to prescribed norms.

Johnson's description of contemporary patriarchies in colonized territories might also be defined as white-dominated, white-identified and white-centered. Contemporary patriarchies normalize white elite men as superior and in doing so produce women and non-white people as inferior based on presumed lack of intelligence to justify their oppression. The long patriarchal tradition of feminizing the 'Other' played a tremendous role in the construction of race as it supported the

belief that non-white people lack intelligence and cannot effectively govern in civilized societies.

1.2 Imperialism and Colonialism

The patriarchal need to own private property contributed in numerous ways to global European imperialism and colonization. Feminist scholar Simone deBeauvoir (1952) argues that the ownership of private property is central to patriarchal societies. She explains that with the emergence of agriculture, some five thousand years ago, and the decline of tribal societies came the need to create and maintain ownership of specific territories (p.54). Though not all patriarchal societies engage in imperialism or colonialism, every nation that participated in imperialism and produced racial theorists was patriarchal.

Racial theories were produced at a specific time in history by a specific group of elite European men. Lerner (1997) articulates the connection between imperialism and racial theories, "It can be no accident that these ideological constructions roughly coincided with the development of nationalism and colonialism" (p.184). Miles (1989) explains, "Racial theory cannot be separated from its own historical moment: it was developed at a particular era of British and European colonial expansion in the 19th century which ended in the western occupation of nine-tenths of the surface territory of the globe (p.91)."

The patriarchal desire and need to own and exploit land coupled with the economic shift from feudalism to capitalism gave way to imperialism and

colonialism. Ellingsen's (1999) analysis of the Catholic Church's role in colonization explains the association between capitalism and colonialism:

> The capitalists' need to expand their market led to the western European outreach to other continents, especially to the Far East, in order to gain new markets. It was by accident in quest for new markets in the east, in searching for direct travel lines to the Asian continent, that the Portuguese came to Africa and the Spanish, with Columbus at the helm, came to the new world. It was the same capitalistic concern to obtain cheap labor that created the slave trade. (p. 252)

Linda Smith (1999), an indigenous scholar, provides an insightful description of imperialism. She says:

> The concepts of imperialism and colonialism are crucial ones which are used across a range of disciplines, often with meanings that are taken for granted. The two terms are interconnected and what is generally agreed upon is that colonialism is but one expression of imperialism. Imperialism tends to be used in at least four different ways when describing the form of European imperialism which 'started' in the fifteenth century: (1) imperialism as economic expansion; (2) imperialism as the subjugation of 'others'; (3) imperialism as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization; and (4) imperialism as a discursive field of knowledge…Initially, the term was used by historians to explain a series of developments leading to the economic expansion of Europe. (p.21)

Whereas imperialism usually implies the conquering of foreign land to exploit natural and human resources, colonialism also includes the settlement of the territory with populations from the 'mother' country.

Smith (1999) explains how imperialism and colonization impact colonized people: "Imperialism was the system of control which secured the markets and capital investments. Colonialism facilitated this expansion by ensuring that there was European control, which necessarily meant securing and subjugating the indigenous populations" (p.21). The displacement and genocide of Indigenous peoples and

knowledge are consequences of, and necessary for, the success of imperialism and colonialism. Olive Dickason (1984) explains that, "The rise of states has inexorably led to the subordination of non-state societies, usually resulting in their disappearance or their incorporation to a greater or lesser degree into the dominant group" (p.278).

European imperialism and colonization were in part reactions to exploitation of resources and overpopulation in the 'mother' countries. Joseph Chamberlain, a British Imperialist, makes this insight very clear in his description of England as it engaged in the competition for global imperialism:

> We have suffered much in this country from depression of trade. We know how many of our fellow subjects are at this moment unemployed…The area of the United Kingdom is only 120,000 miles; the area of the British Empire is over 9,000,000 square miles…If tomorrow it were possible, as some people apparently desire, to reduce by a stroke of the pen the British Empire to the dimensions of the United Kingdom, half at least of our population would be starved… (1897/1991, p.213)

Despite the fact that Britain needed to colonize territories to survive as a competitive patriarchal power, the need for colonization was often legitimized by the Eurocentric belief that it was Britain's inherent duty to civilize primitive people and with that duty came entitlement to indigenous land and resources.

A justification used to subordinate 'non-nation states' is the belief in the superiority of the oppressors. For example, Cecil Rhodes, a British Imperialist, wrote "…that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better for the human race" (1877/1991, p.212). Another example of this idea is expressed in an excerpt taken from the British statistician Karl Pearson (1900/1991) who wrote:

> The path to progress is strewn with the wrecks of nations; traces are everywhere to be seen of the hecatombs of inferior races, and of victims who found not the narrow path to perfection. Yet these dead people are, in very truth, the stepping-stones on which mankind have arisen to the higher intellectual and deeper emotional life of today. (p.217)

Entitlement to the land and resources of colonized territories was justified by the belief in European superiority. It is important to understand that the majority of imperialists espoused the samples of ideas presented. These men held significant power and their ideas made a tremendous impact on the direction imperialism would take in the nineteenth and twentith centuries.

Cases did exist where Europeans attempted to build alliances with indigenous peoples in Canada, such as in the early stages of the Fur Trade. Dickason (1984) provides an example from the early stages of French colonialism in Eastern Canada. She explains that the French were willing to build 'alliances' with Indigenous peoples but "did not lose sight of their perspective of themselves as a civilized Christian nation whose mission it was to lead backward native peoples to a better life" (p. 277). Even when alliances were built, the belief in the superiority of the 'civilized' society prevailed.

The belief in European superiority justified the expansion of imperialism in spite of the failure of European societies to meet the needs of European populations in their homelands. In addition, imperialism was justified in Canada because it was believed the British (and in the early stages of colonialism the French) could offer 'civilization' to 'primitive' peoples. Conceptions of European - primarily British in Canada - superiority and what constitutes civilizations played an enormous role in the production of white superiority in racial theories.

1.3 The Enlightenment

Throughout the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, European scholars rediscovered ancient Greek texts, which promoted a return to 'reason' through scientific observation and the dismissal of superstition in an attempt to become 'fully civilized.' Hannaford (1996) explains, "From the sixteenth century on, … early Greek texts were plundered by writers for alleged insights into the racial and ethnic composition of the antique world" (p.20). It was believed that Greek texts could serve as an aid in understanding the inhabitants of the new world. Enlightenment scholars appropriated Greek ideas about foreigners and expanded on them to develop what is now defined as Primitivism.

Boas (1973) provides an insightful description of Enlightenment primitivism: "Primitivism maintains that the earliest stage of human history was the best, that the earliest period of national, religious, artistic, or in fact any strand of history was better than the periods that have followed, that childhood is better than maturity" (p.577). At the same time, the primitive state, similar to childhood, is not conducive to the reason and progression necessary to become civilized. It was argued that indigenous peoples were 'stuck' in the primitive state and merely lacked the opportunity or ability to become civilized. Although primitive states were romanticized as innocent and pure, and in this sense ideal, they are also described as inferior to civilized states. The paradox of indigenous peoples as both innocent and primitive is reflected in the term 'noble savage.'

During the Enlightenment the term *sauvage* was introduced to describe indigenous peoples. Engels (1972) draws from Lewis Morgan to explain:

> Morgan was the first person with expert knowledge to attempt to introduce a definite order into the history of primitive man; so long as no additional material makes changes necessary, his classification will undoubtedly remain in force.
>
> Of the three main epochs – savagery, barbarism, and civilization – he is concerned, of course, only with the first two and the transition to the third. (p.87)

Dickason (1984) explains that the French term *sauvage* "denotes a person who lives away from society, beyond the pale of its laws, without fixed abode; by analogy, one who is rude and fierce" (p.63). Rousseau (1712-1778) used the term 'noble savage' in an altruistic attempt to demonstrate man is naturally good as a response to initial European perceptions of Indigenous peoples (Banton, 1998, p.23). Rousseau (1762/1968) argued:

> Let us be less arrogant, then, when we judge on which side real misery is found. Nothing, on the other hand could be more miserable than a savage exposed to the dazzling light of our civilization, tormented by our passions and reasoning about a state different from his own. (p.71)

Rousseau argued that once primitive peoples were introduced to civilization they could never return to a state of natural balance because of technological corruption, which is an unavoidable consequence of progress.

Banton (1998) points out that the myth of the noble savage changed with the desires of European imperialists (p.240). Images of noble Indigenous peoples transformed to negative stereotypes with increased competition to acquire land. Dickason (1984) argues, "By classifying Amerindians as savages, Europeans were able to create the ideology that helped to make it possible to launch one of the great

movements in the history of western civilization: the colonization of overseas empires" (xiii).

Although savages were described as inferior to civilized populations, it was commonly accepted that all humans had the potential to become 'equal' once absorbed into the dominant culture. During the Enlightenment the concept of human equality was fully developed. Malik (1996) argues, "This belief in the unity of humanity and the equality of man was held by virtually all Enlightenment thinkers. Human beings were naturally equal; inequality was created by society" (p.49). Malik contends that racial divisions in humanity were needed as a consequence of the Enlightenment idea that all humans have the potential to become equal once they are civilized through progress. According to Malik, European Enlightenment philosophers struggled to explain why, if all humans have the potential to become equal, specific populations of people held low socio-economic positions in colonized territories. Malik (2001) explains that racial theory was produced in part to explain why inequality existed in a society that celebrated human equality:

> Many prominent thinkers became convinced that certain types of people were by nature incapable of progressing beyond barbarism. They were *naturally* inferior. The idea of race developed as a way of explaining the persistence of social divisions in a society that had proclaimed a belief in equality. From the racial viewpoint, inequality persisted because society was by nature unequal. (p.1)

Volkov (1999) expands on the hypocrisy of Enlightenment ideology in regards to the exclusion of Jews from mainstream society, "Nevertheless, hints of the *exclusive* potential of these presumably all-*inclusive* theories and of their inherent susceptibility to notions of hierarchy and *in*equality are easy to detect" (p.149).

European imperialists also struggled to construct justifications to oppress indigenous peoples while maintaining the belief that all humans are created equally. Contemporary scholars of racial theory point to the relationship between justifications for inequality and the construction of racial theories. In America, "Any writings about racial differences were immediately scrutinized to see what implications they might have for the conflict over Negro slavery" (Banton, 1998, p.48). Willinsky explains, "…it was with the ending of slavery in the British Empire, through the Emancipation Act of 1833, that the scientific study of race began in earnest…" (1998, p.163). Smedley (1999) further articulates, "There should be no doubt that such intensity of attention [to the Negro's place in nature] was a besieged culture's response to the rise of militant abolitionism, the threat of emancipation, and its own fear of irrevocable social changes" (p.230). Because the abolition of the slave trade did not result in a change in the socio-economic status of African Americans or shift the dominant perception that black skin signifies inferiority, millions of emancipated slaves were released into a society in which they held no political, social or economic power. The belief in African *inherent* inferiority justified the ongoing oppression of Africans post-abolition.

Ironically, the belief in human equality necessitated the construction of colonized populations as 'inherently' inferior in racial theories to justify oppression. The belief that all humans are created equally or have equal potential is closely related to the contemporary belief in meritocracy. If it is accepted that all humans have an equal opportunity to 'succeed' (dominate) but a large segment of the population cannot succeed, it is possible to blame this situation on the *inherent*

inferiority of the 'unsuccessful' population, thus ignoring and justifying the oppressive processes and practices that perpetuates inequality.

1.4 Christianity

The impact of Christianity on the production of racial theory and the justification of colonization cannot be overstated (Smedley, 1999; Dyer, 1997; Boyarin, 1994). Christian ideology was pervasive amongst all racial theorists. Ideas about Jews as dark and inferior certainly influenced the descriptions applied to non-Caucasian racial categories (Relke, 1999). Smedley (1999) argues, "It [race] evolved in a Judeo-Christian world as a justification for perpetuating inhumanities on others" (p.35). Anti-Semitism and derogatory descriptions of Jews supported racial theory as Gilman (1985) explains, "The association was an artefact of the Christian perception of the Jew which was simply incorporated into the rhetoric of race" (p.31).

Christian descriptions of indigenous peoples were used to justify imperialism and colonization. Smedley (1999) argues, "Because they were savages (the stereotype held that all Indians were nomadic hunters and gatherers), they had no right to exist on lands that God had given to white men" (p.176). The belief that Christians are the 'chosen' peoples and shall 'inherit the earth' was used as an explanation for the acquisition of indigenous land. Missionary work was also used to justify colonialism, as Ellingsen (1999) explains:

> Power was at stake for the church in the colonizing efforts because these efforts provided the church with the chance to extend its sphere of influence and serve the sovereigns who requested its presence in the colonies. There were bright moments. The church experienced its greatest period of expansion in these years, and some sensitivity to certain indigenous cultures was shown in the missionary work done.

> However, the church failed miserably on the dynamics that created slavery and colonialism. (p.252)

There are countless examples of missionaries who traveled to colonized territories to evangelise indigenous peoples and in doing so challenged, disrupted and demonized traditional indigenous belief systems. In Canada, missionaries became complicit in colonialism with the development of government-run missionary schools. Initially, Christian ideology held that indigenous peoples are inferior to non-Christians, but also maintained that civilization was possible with proper religious training.

Before race was theorized, explanations for human difference were largely drawn from interpretations of the bible. Smedley (1999) further contends, "Until the 19th century, the major source of knowledge and explanations of the world and it complexities were the biblical interpretations and inferences made largely by men of the church" (p.152). Miles (1989) explains:

> As we have seen, biblical interpretations suggested that the human species was a divine creation and that all human beings, past and present, were descended from Adam and Eve, implying some ultimate homogeneity of the human species. One method of resolving this problem without questioning the legitimacy of biblical explanation was to claim that God had responded to the commission of human sin by damnation and the descendents of those damned were marked by distinctive features (such as Black skin). Another, with an equally long pedigree, placed less emphasis on divine intervention, maintaining that environmental factors (such as influences of the sun) had modified the original and single biological form represented by Adam and Eve, creating a number of different types which had subsequently become permanently established by hereditary means. (p.32)

Several biblical stories were used to justify and explain human difference based on skin colour. As Miles states, according to Christian theology, humans are all descendants of Adam and Eve, who are presumed to be White. Hannaford (1996)

points to five biblical stories, which have since become "pivotal to the understanding of race thinking" (p.89). The story most often referred to is that of the flood and Noah and his sons. According to one interpretation of scripture, after the flood, Noah's son Ham sinned and God marked him with dark skin as a constant reminder of his immoral nature.

Contrary to beliefs about God's damnation of non-white humans, the belief in environmentalism supported biblical interpretations of human difference through assumptions that environmental climate differences created differences amongst the intelligence and moral character of specific populations. These differences are reflected in physical appearance. As Miles (1989) explains, "The Christian belief in common origin implied that the African's skin color had been acquired after God's creation of the human species, but by the late eighteenth century the claim the blackness was the result of God's curse was no longer considered satisfactory and the argument that the climate was the key determinant increased in significance" (p.29). The argument that human physical appearance and cultural variation was "determined by climatic, topographical and hydrographical conditions…was used to explain the whole range of phenotypical diversity that was known at that time" (Miles, 1989, p.15).

Environmentalism became a popular and accepted means to understand human difference. "For most of the 17th and 18th centuries, the predominant explanation for the existence of the African as a different sort of human being drew upon environmentalist arguments" (p.29). As Miles argues, the environmentalist explanation for human difference was widely accepted in America and Europe in the

late 18th century. The connection between physical appearance, intelligence, morality and human worth in Christian environmentalist ideology greatly influenced the construction of racial categories as distinctively inferior or superior according to skin colour. This construction can be associated with the eventual production of the (erroneous) belief in racial purity.

1.5 Race Before Racial Theory

Michael Banton (1998) explains that racial theories were in part a call to answer questions identified in the following passage:

> Contemplating reports about the life of peoples in the newly discovered regions of America, Europeans were bound to ask, 'why are they not like us?' Trying to identify what was distinctive about these other peoples, Europeans were forced into a new self-consciousness. They had to ask what was distinctive about themselves and why their own way of life was preferred. (p.23)

Before the construction of biological racial categories, Europeans answered the former question by labeling humans as superior or inferior according to religious and political beliefs, socio-economic classes, family lineages and gender. The term 'race' was used to describe a hierarchy of socio-economic divisions, which maintained patriarchal power and was not associated with physical appearance. Lerner (1997) articulates, "For centuries it [race] was almost identical with kin. The term 'race' first appeared in the sixteenth century; only in the 19th century was it biologized" (p.184). Before colonial expansion, Europeans viewed race as a description of social distinctions, not of color differences. Malik (1996) explains how perceptions of the working class were appropriated into racial theories, "Indeed, the view of non-Europeans as an inferior race was but an extension of the already existing view of the

working class at home and took considerable time to establish as the normative view" (p.91). Gilman (1985) further explains that the perception and stereotypes of non-Caucasians as degenerate, irrational and sexually deviant was an extension of the views of the working class, the mentally ill, and of women in England. With the production of race as scientific knowledge in racial theories, the understanding of race changed dramatically.

1.6 Conclusion

Racial theorists were European and American men who were influenced by the ideological, historical and social context in which they lived. Although it is difficult to imagine, contemporary ideas about race did not always exist. As demonstrated, the primary ideas that shaped the construction of eighteenth and nineteenth century racial theories include the construction of 'Other' as inferior, the belief in European superiority, the reconciliation of beliefs in human equality with obvious social inequalities, and the connection between physical appearance, intelligence and human worth. These ideas contributed to constructions of non-white inferiority, white superiority, inherent racial differences and racial purity in racial theories. In many respects, racial theories did not construct new ideas. However, there are several critical elements within racial theories that changed the way humans perceive and relate to each other. These elements worked to produce racist ideology as will be demonstrated in Part Two.

PART TWO

Racial Theories

Contemporary racist ideology, practices, and processes are grounded in and were originally justified by historically constructed theories of race. Racial categories were predominantly produced and theorized in the nineteenth century and coincided with mass European colonialism. The era in which biological racial categories were recognized as scientific fact is more or less limited to the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War Two, a period in which the mantle of authority was assumed by science over religion. After world war two, scientists and scholars such as Comas dismissed the idea that there are inherent inferior or superior pure races in the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) *The Race Question in Modern Science* (1956, p.18). However, throughout the globe, ideas constructed in racial theories continue to surface in mainstream discourse and manifest in inequitable power structures divided by racialized populations. The fact that race is a construction and exists to serve a very specific purpose – to justify the subordination of colonized peoples – is often unknown or dismissed. Although a body of scholarship is critical of race and racism, this scholarship is not offered within the majority of mainstream educational institutions or within cultural awareness programs. This part of the thesis provides a brief history of the construction of race and highlights key ideas that continue to

inform society's assumptions about race that are normalized as common sense. Central ideas of non-white inferiority, white superiority, inherent racial differences, and racial purity were developed in the Part One. These key ideas appear at various points in the history of racial theories.

2.1 Racial Categories

One of the most powerful ideas constructed in racial theory is that humans can be divided into a hierarchical set of categories. Racial theorists categorized, classified and organized humans into hierarchies, reflecting the era's obsession with ideas as reflected in the *Great Chain of Being,* the essence being that God had created all living things and had organized them into a hierarchy of existence (Lovejoy, 1936, p.58). Although Enlightenment scholars such as Benier, Voltaire, Kant and von Herder each wrote influential pieces on racial difference, contemporary authors most often turn to the taxonomists Linnaeus and Blumenbach to describe the origins of racial 'categories.' Racial categories, the division of humans into races, were the basis of subsequent work of racial theorists who developed races into a hierarchy with descriptions to connote the worth of each category. Gould (1996), Banton (1998) and Willinsky (1998), who all write about the historical construction of race, provide evidence of this idea, as demonstrated in the following section.

Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778) is credited as the father of taxonomy and the first to divide humans into categories according to geography and skin colour. However, he was not particularly interested in the classification of humans. By the10th edition of *Systema naturae* in 1758 he had classified 4,400 species of animals

and 7,700 species of plants. When Linnaeus first classified humans, he divided them into two categories: *homo-sapiens*, which represented all 'normal' human beings and *homo-monstrous*, which depicted 'abnormal' human beings (Willinsky, 1998, p.162). Linnaeus based his description of the homo-monstrous race on Greek and Roman descriptions of Africans who did not live up to Greek standards of beauty, intelligence and strength. Willinsky (1998) explains, "The Romans and Greeks had identified monstrous races in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa, setting them apart from the true Africans, who were depicted in classical art and literature as praiseworthy for their beauty, wisdom and fierceness, and for their religious beliefs" (p.161). Humans who lived outside of civilized society were often described with a wide assortment of imaginary traits. Willinsky draws from the encyclopaedia *The Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493 to describe traits that included "a man with a dog's head, another with a single eye, another with no head, and yet another with his feet pointing backward, and on it goes through fourteen variations" (p.161). Gould (1996) explains that the monstrous races were an invention of, "travelers' tales of hairy people with tails, and other assorted fables" (p. 404). It is important to note that Linnaeus's original division of humans into biological categories depended on an 'Other' to offset the superiority of 'normal' human beings.

Banton (1998) provides a description of how Linnaeus further divided humans into six categories:

> In the tenth edition of his *Systema Naturae* (1758) Linnaeus divided the species *Homo sapiens* into six diurnal varieties: *ferus* (four-footed, mute, hairy); *americanus* (red, choleric, erect); *europaeus* (white, ruddy, muscular); *asiaticus* (yellow, melancholic, inflexible); *afer* (black, phlegmatic, indulgent); *monstrous* (further subdivided to include deviant forms from several regions). The diurnal varieties

> were compared with a single nocturnal one, the troglodytes or cave-dwellers, exemplified by Homo sylvestris (man of the woods or Orang Utan). (p.20)

Gould (1996) explains that the 'ferus' were said to be "wild boys occasionally discovered in the woods and possibly raised by animals" (p.404).

According to Gould (1996), Linnaeus focused on the Americanus, Europaeus, Asiaticus and Afer geographic groups, commonly referred to today as the Red, White, Yellow and Black races. The three descriptors used to describe each category represented skin pigmentation, temperament, and posture. Gould (1996) points out that Linneaus' categories represented geographical populations and were not an indication of inferiority or superiority:

> Nonetheless, and despite these implications, the overt geometry of Linnaeus's model is not linear or hierarchical. When we epitomize his scheme as an essential picture in our mind, we see a map of the world divided into four regions, with the people in each region characterized by a list of different traits. In short, Linneaus uses cartography as a primary principle for human ordering; if he had wished to push ranking as the essential picture of human variety, he would surely have listed Europeans first and Africans last, but he started with Native Americans instead. (p.405)

Although Linnaeus did not place the races into a hierarchy, his theory is significant in regard to how race is perceived in contemporary terms because he set out categories, which eventually were theorized to be pure and fixed. Banton (1998) explains, "The Linnaean classificatory enterprise depended upon the assumption that the various sets of individuals to be classified were stable, for how could they be classified if they were changing?" (p.21). Whether or not Linnaeus believed humans could be divided into a hierarchy is not as important as understanding the impact his classifications had in terms of developing the belief in racial grouping and subsequently racial purity.

The belief in racial purity coupled with the idea that races can be categorized according to inherent superiority or inferiority continues to underwrite racist ideology. Linnaeus' work influenced J. F. Blumenbach (1752-1840), a German naturalist and student of Linnaeus. Blumenbach is credited as the first to place Linnaeus' racial categories into a hierarchy with Europeans at the top. Gould (1996) argues that Blumenbach "…established the most influential of all the racial classifications" (p.399). Part of this claim is due to the fact that Blumenbach coined the term 'Caucasian.' The term Caucasian was based on Blumenbach's assertion that the residents of Russia's Mt. Caucasus region possessed "supposed maximum beauty" (p.402). In *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, first published in 1795, Blumenbach (1795/2000) argues:

> I have taken the name of this variety from Mount Caucasus, both because its neighbourhood, and especially its southern slope, produces the most beautiful race of men, I mean the Georgian; and because all physiological reasons converge to this…For in the first place, that stock displays, as we have seen…, the most beautiful form of the skull, from which, as from a mean and primeval type, the others diverge… (p.31)

Blumenbach categorized human beings into five races in a hierarchy according to his perception of each race's physical beauty:

> I have allotted the first place to Caucasian, for the reasons given below, which make me esteem it the primeval one. This diverges into both directions into two, most remote and very different from each other; on the one side namely, into the Ethiopian, and on the other into the Mongolian. The remaining two occupy the intermediate positions between that primeval one and these two extreme varieties; that is, the American between the Caucasian and Mongolian; the Malay between the same Caucasian and Ethiopian. (p.27 - 28)

Blumenbach's classification system is important because it marks a shift from Linnaeus' geographical racial model to a hierarchical racial model based on human aesthetics. Blumenbach supports his decision to place Caucasians at the top of the hierarchy because, "…[The Caucasian] is white in colour, which we may fairly assume to have been the primitive colour of mankind, since, as we have shown above… it is very easy for that to degenerate into brown, but very much more difficult for dark to become white…" (Blumenbach, 1795/2000, p.31). The idea that Caucasians are the 'original' race also informs racist ideology. Caucasians, or 'White' people, were constructed as the original pure race of which all other races diverged. However, scholars such as Gould (1996) argue it was not Blumenbach's intention to create a hierarchy based on racial purity and human worth. Blumenbach observed variation within each category and argues that human populations are not 'fixed':

> Although there seems to be so great a difference between widely separate nations, that you might easily take the inhabitants of Cape of Good Hope, the Greenlanders and the Circassians for so many different species of man, yet when the matter is thoroughly considered, you see that all do so run into one another, that you cannot mark out the limits between them. (as cited in Malik, 1996, p.4)

Blumenbach believed humans belong to the same species. Furthermore, he, like Linnaeus, does not describe the races as 'inherently' inferior or superior although the descriptors ascribed to each category are obviously more favourable for Caucasians. However, the idea that humans can be divided into a hierarchy of categories cannot be understated in the construction of race and racist ideology. Nor can the fact that Caucasians were described as the most favourable and placed at the top of the hierarchy.

2.2 Racial Theorists

Throughout the nineteenth century prominent and influential writers and scientists produced what is now defined as 'racial theory.' Racial theorists sought to describe racial categories in an attempt to make the connection between human worth and racial difference. Racial theorists debated topics such as the humanness of various races, the number of races, the origin of races, the existence and shape of racial hierarchies, if races are types, species or subspecies, in monogenesis or polygenesis, the consequences of racial mixture and the ability of inferior races to become civilized. All of these queries were contemplated and responded to without the input of anyone other than the theorists yet the responses affected and justified the oppression of 'non-Caucasian' peoples at a global level. It is important to note that racial theories always reflected the changing needs of imperial and colonial powers.

Throughout the nineteenth century race became an obsession. Discourses about race were produced at an astoundingly high rate throughout Europe and America, where imperialism and slavery needed to be accounted for and justified in a social political climate that claimed human equality. Smedley (1999) argues, "The enormous waste of scientific energy, time, and money that accompanied this controversy set back the study of human biology for generations" (p.230). However, the global effects of racial theories on humans and their environments in terms of poverty and exploitation are consequences that far outweigh the waste of scientific energy, time and money.

An examination of racial theorists reveals that they were often completely disconnected from the people they described. The impact of the theory on those who were categorized as inferior was most likely not a concern. Smedley (1999) explains, "All of the scholars who produced classifications of human groups, we will be reminded, were Europeans. None had extensive experience with diverse human groups, except for Bernier; most had never even seen a "savage" " (p.165). Racial theory was predominantly produced by white European and American men who could benefit from racist justifications for imperialism and colonialism. Smedley explains:

> The syncretism of scientific and popular perspectives on human variation should not surprise us, not only because of the rudimentary nature of all science at the time and the lack of positive and objective epistemology but also because scientists too often came from a class of people who had vested interests in the profit-oriented activities of overseas enterprises. (p.169)

Contemporary scholars Goldberg (1993), Banton (1998), Hannaford (1996), Smedly (1999) and Gould (1996) write extensively about the prominent theorists who contributed to the race debate. Although there is a wide variety of racial theory to study, several interconnected themes exist between all racial theories presented in the first half of the nineteenth century. Rather than focus on the contributions of individual theorists, this section will highlight significant ideas ascribed to race that continue to produce racist ideology. Racial theorists expanded on the idea that humans can be divided into a hierarchy of categories by arguing these categories are fixed/pure and can become contaminated through interracial sexual intercourse, which produce children. Central to the production of racial purity is the belief in

Caucasian superiority, which underlines and relies on all descriptions of non-Caucasians inferiority.

2.3 The Production of Non-Caucasian Inferiority

From its taxonomical origins, to traditional disciplines such as history and literature to the emerging fields of anthropology and biology, the language of race and therefore racist ideology gave scientific authority to influence western discourse and perceptions of the non-Caucasian 'Other' as inherently inferior. The major themes of nineteenth century racial theory all work to reinforce the belief that non-Caucasians are inferior as a result of their *inherent* uncivilized or 'feminine' characteristics. Similar to descriptions of women as inherently intellectually inferior and therefore assumed to lack the capacity to effectively govern in civilized societies, as explained in Part One, descriptions of non-Caucasian people justified the oppression of indigenous peoples in colonized territories. The idea that race (skin colour) determines intelligence, similar to the core assumption within environmentalism, is a central aspect of racial theories. Smedley (1999) and Banton (1998) provide two examples in their examination of the contributions of British theorist Dr. Charles White and American scientist and father of craniology Samuel Morton.

In *An Account of the Regular Gradation of Man (1799)*, Charles White theorized that God created the different races separately and accordingly gave each race varying levels of intelligence. White proposed that God granted Caucasians the highest levels of intelligence, while 'Negroids' were the least intelligent as a result of

their close association to apes (Smedley, 1999). Smedley explains that with racial theory descriptions of Africans as inferior became more dangerous and compelling because of the legitimacy that it was granted as scientific knowledge. "It [White's theory] took the question of the Negro's place in the natural scheme so widely held in folk beliefs and placed it unambiguously in the realm of science" (Smedley, p.228). White encouraged the belief that 'Negroids,' were *inherently* intellectually inferior to Caucasians.

Morton supported the belief that human intelligence is determined by skull size with his studies on human skulls in *Crania Americana* of 1839 and *Crania Aegyptiaca* of 1844. In his work he made the claim that brain size equates intelligence. Smedley argues, "Acting on the presupposition that brain size directly correlated with intelligence, Morton asserted an idea already on its way to orthodoxy in science: the natural superiority of the white races over all others" (Smedley, 1999, p.232). Morton used his measurements to claim that Caucasians have the largest skulls while Negros have the smallest. He bases his claim on the measurements of 52 Caucasian, 10 Mongoloid, 18 Malay, 147 American/Indian and 29 Negro skulls. It is significant that Morton chose to measure the skulls according to racial categories. Had he measured the skulls first and divided them according to size, his results would have reflected the variety found within presumed racial groups. Although Morton's findings have since been disproven for several reasons, such as inaccurate measurements and the erroneous assumption that cranial size equates intelligence (Banton, 1998; Gould, 1981), his ideas continue to influence perceptions of

indigenous peoples an inherently intellectually inferior, as will be demonstrated in Part Three.

Given that racial theories constructed non-Caucasians as inherently intellectually inferior to Caucasians it is fitting that non-Caucasians were also described as lacking the full capacity to become 'civilized' by their own means. Banton (1998) argues that racial theorists made the "contention that differences in culture and mental quality were produced by differences in physique" (p. 46). Many theorists argued that the Caucasian race is innately prone to build civilizations while non-Caucasian races naturally turn to primitive lifestyles.

As with intelligence levels, Samuel Morton also used brain size to determine a racial group's ability to become civilized. Banton (1998) explains that, "Difference in brain size, he [Morton] implied, explained differences in the capacity for civilization" (p.50). In terms of Indigenous peoples in North America, Smedley (1999) points out, "They were, he believed, inherently savage, and it would be difficult, if not impossible for them to survive under the onslaught of European superiority" (p.232). Before racial theory was produced it was widely believed that people described as primitive could become civilized with the aid of westerners. Banton draws from a report written by George M. Fredrickson in 1971 to explain, "…prior to the 1830s although black subordination was widespread and whites commonly assumed that Negroes were inferior, 'open assertions of *permanent* inferiority were exceedingly rare'" (p.49).

To demonstrate the inherent primitive nature of non-Caucasian populations, the racial theorist Josiah Nott compared non-Caucasian populations to children in

Types of Mankind. Nott pointed to emancipated African slaves' inability to adapt to freedom in America to make his case (Smedley, 1999, p.234). Theorists such as Morton and Cuvier utilized racial theory to dismiss historical evidence that the ancient Egyptians were Ethiopian or African (Smedley, p.233). In order to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Caucasian race is superior to all other races, racial theorists had to explain circumstances when non-Caucasians clearly demonstrated the ability to build 'civilized' societies. The construction of indigenous peoples as inherently intellectually inferior was used as a justification for slavery, imperialism and colonization because it was believed that primitive people lacked the inherent capacity to govern civilizations. Central to the idea that non-Caucasians are *inherently* inferior is the construction of racial purity to create a clear divide between inferior and superior races.

2.4 Racial Purity and Hybridity

Linnaeus and Blumenbach did not prescribe to the purity or fixity of races but perceived races as types that transformed throughout time. Their categories were a way to organize information about humans, and not necessarily a means to define inherent difference between groups according to skin colour. However, the majority of subsequent racial theorists who wrote about race described the categories as pure and fixed. The idea that race is permanent is evident in the abundance of theories on human 'hybridity.'

It is useful to examine the idea of hybridity for how it was used to perpetuate the illusion that pure superior and inferior races exist, a core element of racist

ideology. Robert Young (1995) defines racial theory that explains the consequences of racial mixture as 'hybridity' theory. The term hybridity was first used to describe the combination of distinct languages indigenous to a specific territory. Grecian philosophy taught that the combination of two languages, a hybrid language, was to be avoided, as the original languages would lose their meaning. The *Oxford English Dictionary* first used the word hybridity in 1828 to describe the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar and in 1861 to define the 'offspring' of human parents of different races. In contemporary Canada, the terms half-breed, mixed-blood, bi-racial or mixed-raced are used to describe human hybridity. Many people who have Aboriginal and European ancestry identify as Métis, derived from the French word *métissage* which means 'mixed.'

"Despite its historical association, which bears the dubious traces of colonial and white supremist ideologies, most of the contemporary discussions on hybridity are preoccupied by its potential for inclusively" (Papastergiadis, 1997, p.259). Homi Bhabha (1994) is credited as the post-colonial theorist to reclaim the term hybridity in an attempt to describe the combination of different cultural groups that form a montage or a third space where there is possibility to resist colonial discourse and power structures. However, postcolonial hybridity theory does not necessarily challenge assumptions about racial and cultural superiority and purity. Furthermore, as Papastergiadis explains, "Gayatri Spivak feels that the preoccupation with [cultural] hybridity in academic discourse has tended to gloss persistent social divisions of class and gender" (p.259).

Hybridity is a contentious issue because it challenges socio-economic divisions based on race. If a person is 'mixed' is he or she the oppressed, the oppressor or both? Paradoxically, the idea of human hybridity both relies on and challenges the conception of pure races. 'Hybridity' is in itself a threat to patriarchal colonial power structures. As such, an enormous amount of racial theory was developed in the first half of the nineteenth century that sought to explain, objectify and dehumanize 'hybrids.' Robert Young (1995, p.18) has classified theories of racial hybridity into four general categories: polygenesis, amalgamation, decomposition, and raceless chaos.

The belief in polygenesis rests on the premise that separate races are actually separate species, each with its own origin. The theory centres on the idea that Caucasians derived from Adam while other species emerged from 'inferior stocks' or were created separately by God. Polygenesis theories often relied on the biological scientific theory that two distinct species either cannot reproduce or produce offspring that are infertile. These arguments changed depending on the evidence gathered. For example Smedley (1999) explains, "Morton intuited that human hybrids somehow contradicted the law of nature. Eventually he concluded that infertility did not prove the unity of the human species" (p.233). When it was obvious that different races can reproduce the theory changed to reflect this as will be demonstrated in the next section, but with the contention to maintain the belief in pure races.

Theorists who believed in amalgamation supported the argument that all races can interbreed and produce offspring, sometimes resulting in a new race of people. However, theorists such as French historian Author Gobineau, argued that white and

non-white races can amalgamate but that that racial mixture will lead to the eventual downfall of western civilizations due to the gradual degeneration of the superior Caucasian race. de Gobineau (1853/2000) argued:

> So long as the blood and institutions of a nation keep to a sufficient degree the impress of the original race, that nation exists…But if, like the Greeks, and the Romans of the later Empire, the people have been absolutely drained of its original blood, and the qualities conferred by the blood, then the day of its defeat will be the day of its death. It has used up the time that heaven granted at its birth for it has changed its race, and with its race its nature. It is therefore degenerate. (p.52)

Gobineau's ideas were extremely influential in the construction of racist ideologies used as justifications for oppressive policies required in the production of 'white nations' in the nineteenth century, and for outlawing marriages between 'the races.'

Decomposition theorists argued that the races could interbreed but eventually the offspring would become infertile or revert back to one of the parent races. This was a very common argument made by racial theorists such as American theorists Nott and Gliddon. In *Types of Mankind* (1854), Nott argued, "hybrids could not reproduce between themselves but could do so when mated with the parent stock" (as cited in Banton, 1998, p.57). 'Proximity of race' is interconnected with 'decomposition' and was popular and influential from the 1850s to the 1930s. It was believed that the greater the similarities between racial groups, the higher the chance racial mixture could produce fertile offspring.

French scientist Paul Broca supported the belief in proximity of race in *On the Phenomena of Hybridity in the Genus Homo,* first published as an article in 1858 (Young, 1995, p.13). Young explains, "Broca himself went so far as to classify differing degrees of fertility as agenesic, dysgenesic, paragenesic and eugenesic"

(p.16). To Broca, it was possible for racial groups similar in physical appearance, intellect and civilizing capacity to create fertile hybrids, while the hybrids of those with greater differences, such as Caucasians and Negros, would not be able to survive as their own separate race.

It was believed by many racial theorists including Gobineau, Agassiz and Vogt that the mixture of different races would create a "mongrel group that makes up a 'raceless chaos', merely a corruption of the originals, degenerate and degraded, threatening to subvert the vigor and virtue of the pure races with which they come into contact" (Young, 1995, p. 18). Racial mixture, although some argued unavoidable due to natural laws of attraction, was perceived as an enormous threat to patriarchal colonial power structures. The 'Raceless Chaos' argument is a reflection of the fear of racial mixture, as Robert Young explains:

> Here, therefore, at the heart of racial theory, in its most sinister, offensive move, hybridity also maps out its most anxious, vulnerable site: a fulcrum at its edge and centre where its dialectics of injustice, hatred and oppression can find themselves effaced and expunged. (19)

Hybridity theories provided a justification to regulate sexual relations between the colonizer and the colonized. The downfall of colonial power structures as a consequence of racial mixture is not an unfounded fear in colonial societies – hybridity theory is merely an effect and product of this fear.

To prevent the production of 'hybrid' children, sexual relations between different races were often regulated. Numerous scholars write about the need to regulate sexual activities between Indigenous peoples and Europeans in colonized territories throughout the globe (Stoler, 2002; Dickason, 1984; McClintock, 1995; Van Kirk, 1999; Goldberg, 2000; Hodes, 1999). The fear of 'miscegenation,' the

mixture (miscere) of human races (genus), was a product of nineteenth century racial theory that stressed the negative consequences of hybridity. Post-colonial theorists Stoler (2002), McClintock (1995) and Young (1995) write extensively about the fear of miscegenation as a means to maintain clear divisions of economic and political power between racialized groups in colonized territories. The idea that there are pure racial identities that can become contaminated or impure through mixture is a prominent factor of racist ideology as it serves to perpetuate colonial divisions of power based on race.

2.5 Race Interrupted: Darwin's Theory of Evolution

Charles Darwin's *The Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, also known as *The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*, was first published in 1859 and forced racial theorists to evaluate and question all they had believed about race. Although *Origins* did not address humans, racial theorists began to ask how the theory of evolution would affect popular conceptions about human difference. Darwin tackled the issue of human races in 1871 with *Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Darwin (1989) viewed human races as 'sub-species' or types of the same species, which gradually change and evolve throughout time, as demonstrated in the following passage:

> But since he attained to the rank of manhood, he has diverged into distinct races, or as they may be more carefully called, subspecies…Nevertheless all the races agree in so many important details of structure and in so many mental peculiarities, that these can be accounted for only by inheritance from a common progenitor; and a progenitor thus characterized would probably deserve to rank as man. (p.633)

Darwin believed that all species originate from a single life form and therefore share common ancestry. Distinct species occur because "it [a species] can evolve to the point that it is no longer able to inter-breed with other forms that have split off from the same stock. *This* is the origin of the species" (Banton, 1998, p.85). Members of a specific species can procreate and are the result of millions of years of evolution. Mutations within a species that may serve as beneficial to a particular environment or are perceived as desirable are passed on from one generation to the next through reproduction. This process may occur by means of natural or sexual selection and has since been demonstrated with the discovery of DNA and genomes. Darwin's theory of evolution challenged prominent nineteenth-century racial theories in a variety of ways including the following arguments:

1. Because all humans are of the same species, all can procreate – infertility due to hybridity is therefore not scientifically sound. In fact, Darwin argued mixture is more conducive to survival than the maintenance of homogenous groups.
2. If physical differences are a result of mutations that are selected through reproduction to increase the chances of the survival of a species, physical difference does not necessarily signify degeneracy or inferiority.
3. Darwin's theory demonstrates that all human physical difference occurs as a result of gradual changes and permanence of any perceived racial group is not natural.
4. Intelligence indicates how a particular population adapts to their environment to ensure survival. Darwin argued that intelligence is relative and not innate.

According to Darwin's theories, race does not determine intelligence or explain social inequality. Scholars such as Kaye (1997) and Gould (1995) praise Darwin for his Christian influenced humanitarian ideology and the potential challenges evolutionary theory brought to racial theory. However, it should be noted that praise for Darwin often excludes or justifies his descriptions of 'savages' and women. Although he did not agree with using the racial labels popular in his time, he did prescribe to common beliefs about 'savage' populations as 'primitive' in comparison to evolved 'civilized' societies.

By the time *Descent of Man* was published, the term 'savage' brought to the general public's minds images of 'non-Caucasians.' Assumptions about fixed racial categories placed in a hierarchy were not displaced in common discourse by Darwin's theories. Darwin did argue that less civilized societies are a result of natural evolutionary processes; but he did so while maintaining primitive states are unequivocally intellectually inferior to advanced societies. Although Darwin is often credited as not as racist as other racial theorists (Malik, 1996; Banton, 1998; Hannaford, 1996; Young, 1995; Gould, 1996; Kaye, 1997), there is no doubt that he believed in the inferiority of the savage state in comparison to the civilized state as demonstrated in the following passage:

> When civilized nations come into contact with Barbarians the struggle is short, except where a deadly climate gives its aid to the Native race. Of the causes which lead to the victory of civilized nations, some are plain and some very obscure. We can see that the cultivation of the land will be fatal in many ways for savages, for they cannot, or will not, change their habits…and so it may be with the evil effects of spirituous liquors, as well as with the unconquerably strong taste for them shown by so many savages…The grade of civilization seems a most important element in the success of nations which come into competition (Darwin, 2000, p.70)

Savages, Darwin concluded, are lower on the evolutionary scale than civilized men. He provided evidence for his theory by comparing the savage state to that of women. Following the western tradition of feminizing 'primitive' peoples, Darwin (1989) describes both women and savages with similar discourse in *The Descent of Man*:

> It is generally admitted that with women the powers of intuition, of rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation, are more strongly marked than in man; but some, at least, of these faculties are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower civilization. The chief distinction in the intellectual powers of the two sexes is shown by man attaining to a higher eminence in whatever he takes up, than women can attain - whether requiring deep thought, reason or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and hands. (p.563)

This is a very interesting quote for at least two reasons. First, a connection is made between civilized women and the lower races: both are described as being close to nature. Second, Darwin states that civilized men have higher intellectual powers than women and lower races. It can be assumed that Darwin believed that intuition is a primitive, inferior characteristic (as did the Greeks and Enlightenment scholars), while intellectual capacity is a characteristic of the civilized, superior race. Therefore, civilized men – who set the standard to measure intelligence – are intellectual, while all women and primitive men are intuitive or follow their natural instincts. It is important to understand that although Darwin challenged popular conceptions about race, his descriptions of non-Caucasian populations as 'lower' on the evolutionary scale due to their primitive state informed ideas taken up by Social Darwinist theory.

2.6 Social Darwinism & Eugenics

Social Darwinism was supported by scientists such as Herbert Spencer who coined the term 'survival of the fittest' eight years prior to the publication of *The Origins of the Species* (Malik, 1996, p. 90). The phrase 'survival of the fittest' in many ways exemplifies the shift evolutionary theory undertook to support social Darwinist and Eugenics policies – both based on popular conceptions of race, which Darwin's theories challenged. However, although scholars such as Malik (1996) argue, "It was the intellectual and political climate of mid to late Victorian England, and not the theory of evolution itself that shaped the way that [Darwin's theories] was applied to society," (p.90), it is important to acknowledge that Darwin's work supported beliefs in the inferiority of what he deemed as primitive populations.

Social Darwinists shaped Darwin's theories to support the idea that racial and class-based hierarchies could be explained and justified through scientific means – inequality was due to evolution. However, unlike Darwin, who did not believe in essential, distinct, pure human species, or that evolution could be controlled or sped up, social Darwinists believed that the development and implementation of social policy and laws, to ensure the preservation of a pure superior race, would contribute to the evolution of the human species. British imperialists such as Carl Pearson, referred to in Part One, "employed the language of Social Darwinism to promote and justify Anglo-Saxon expansion and domination of other peoples" (Perry, Peden & Von Laue, 1991, p. 215)

The term social Darwinism is used to describe the strand of thinking that informed and justified practices and processes produced with a view to assist the

evolution of the species. Banton (1998) explains, "Much of the literature of this period about physical and social differences has been classed by later commentators as social Darwinist, but this is misleading since it is difficult to find among the various authors any group who shared a common set of principles, apart from those who were supporters of the Eugenics society" (p.91).

Francis Galton, a cousin of Darwin, introduced the term Eugenics in 1883 in *Inquiries into Human faculty and Its Development*. Galton (2000) describes Eugenics as, "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage" (p.79). Galton believed that evolutionary processes that ensured the survival of superior traits within the Caucasian race could be sped up and controlled. He explains:

> Whites might be superior for the time being but their position was precarious. Parents in the higher and more intelligent classes had fewer children; ill educated Irish Catholic parents contributed disproportionately to population growth; eugenic measures were necessary if the national stock was not to decline. (p.92)

Galton was concerned with controlling the reproduction of the inferior segments of the Caucasian population. For him, a strong Caucasian population would ensure that when in conflict with non-Caucasian populations, the superior racial stock would succeed. He argues,

> There are a vast number of conflicting ideals of alternative characters, of incompatible civilizations; but all are wanted to give fullness and interest to life…The aim of Eugenics is to represent each class or sect of man by its best specimens; that done, to leave them to work out their common civilization in their own way. (p.80)

Eugenicists sought to eliminate or marginalize whites who were considered undesirable such as the disabled, mentally ill, elderly, poor, non-Christians, criminals,

and homosexuals to strengthen the 'superior' white stock. The emerging field of psychology aided immensely in this effect. While there are some distinctions between social Darwinist and eugenic ideology, the line that separates the two is blurred. It could be said that social Darwinism is the theory that cultures, like races, can be placed into a hierarchy, thus providing an explanation for social inequality and paternalistic policy. The science of Eugenics is in some ways a response to social Darwinist theory as it offers strategies to ensure that the white race will remain at the top of the cultural hierarchy through measures such as the forced sterilization of 'unfit' whites. McLaren (1990) explains that, "Old-fashioned social Darwinists were true to such beliefs [the application of 'natural' evolution processes to social policy] and willing to let the struggle for existence continue; the eugenicists called for a halt" (p.18). While social Darwinists supported policies and practices that often marginalized and regulated non-white populations, eugenicists supported measures that would ensure the survival of the superior white race.

Much of social Darwinist and Eugenics philosophy centered around the desire to control the production of 'unfit' populations through the regulation of women's sexual activity and ability to reproduce. Unlike Darwin, who argued that high reproduction rates are beneficial to evolution, social Darwinists and eugenicists argued that high birth rates, especially amongst marginalized and mixed raced populations, led to human degeneracy. Kenan Malik (1996) explains, "For social Darwinists, and in particular for Eugenics, the problem was that the unfit – most notably the working class – seemed to be more fertile than the 'fit'" (91).

The term social Darwinism is often used in a variety of contexts by those who write about race and racism and is usually described as an appropriation of Darwin's theories that led to the development of Eugenics or what the Nazi regime defined as 'racial hygiene.' Both social Darwinist and eugenicist ideology were used to justify imperialism. These ideologies were extremely influential in forming and authorizing the western settlement of Canada. It was not until the effects of Eugenics were witnessed through the Holocaust of WWII that social Darwinist and Eugenics ideology became stigmatized and challenged.

2.7 Contemporary Scientific Beliefs in Race

Race may be a construction, but the effect of the construction, racism, is real. As Margaret Mead argued in 1968:

> As long as genetic markers – pigmentation, hair form, facial configuration – are used to identify, stigmatize or glorify certain portions of the population in ways that give them differential access to education, to economic resources, and to deference, the biological knowledge of the inheritance and significance of such characteristics will be socially and politically important. (1968, p.169)

Although the majority of western scientists and scholars today argue that race is a construct, popular discourses suggest it is a fixed biological category. Furthermore, there are numerous scholars, scientists and writers who continue to believe in and perpetuate biological theories of race, which in turn support the belief in inherent racial inferiority and superiority. Scientific journals such as *American Psychologist* perpetuate the idea that race equates with intelligence. A recent example can be found in the article, "Under the Skin: On the Impartial Treatment of Genetic and

Environmental Hypotheses of Racial Differences," by David C. Rowe. Rowe (2005) examines intelligence quotas of mixed raced children and explains:

> For IQ, a one standard deviation difference exists between Blacks and whites – admittedly a large displacement that puts four fifths of Blacks below the white population mean of 100. At the distributional right tail [of DNA], an even more disproportionate racial difference could explain why Black individuals are underrepresented in earned doctoral degrees in the natural sciences or mathematics. (p.62)

Although the author explains that race is based on genetic variations of specific populations, and not necessarily pure racial types, the argument does not take into account the effects of historical and contemporary racist discourse, practice, and policy on intelligence quotient (IQ). His argument ignores the roles that slavery, segregation and the ongoing marginalization of and racism directed toward African Americans and the effects these may have on IQ scores, not to mention that IQ itself is a construct. The idea that there are differences in intelligence based on race perpetuates, justifies, and authorizes social divisions based on patriarchal and colonial power structures.

An article in the *Globe and Mail* about the controversial Human Genome Project (HGP) states, "Despite the long and ugly social history of race, there is no clear-cut definition for the term. Is a person's race defined by skin colour, that most visible of markers? By language, country of birth, the food they eat or the religion they practice? Not even scientists can agree" (June 18, 2005, p.F1). Over two hundred years after Linnaeus first developed his racial model, western society remains obsessed with how to divide humans. This description of the HGP explains:

> The project was a 13-year international drive to map all of the three billion chemical bits, or nucleotides, that make up human DNA. Particular nucleotide sequences (represented by the letters A, C, G and

> T) combine to form an estimated 25,000 genes whose proteins help to produce human traits, from the way your heart beats to the way you comb your hair. The map indicated that humans are 99.9 per cent genetically identical – that in fact, there are greater differences between two frogs in a pond than between any two people who find themselves waiting for a bus." (Abraham, 2005, p.2)

It is the 1% difference that scientists who utilize the HGP focus on to determine genetic differences to account for human inequality in characteristics such as appearance, athletic ability and health discrepancies. As Abraham argues, "Studies are sure to appear on genes linked to complex characteristics in racial groups, such as athletic or cognitive ability or even criminal behaviour" (p.8). The danger of this 'proof' lies in the ability to use it to reinforce racist ideologies, which can be used to argue that socio-economic inequality is a result of racial differences rather than oppressive power structures.

2.8 Conclusion

The montage of racial theory formulated throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries culminated in bizarre and dangerous explanations of human difference. Racial theories centred on the argument that Caucasian people are innately superior to all others. As with other populations who traditionally challenge patriarchal power structures, non-Caucasians were 'feminized' in racial theories as intellectually inferior and therefore unable to govern. However, unlike previous eras, with racial theory the inferiority of non-Caucasians was constructed as permanent and innate. This innate inferiority was used to account for the low social positioning and oppression of indigenous peoples. Although Darwin's ideas challenged the basic premises of racial theories, racist ideology was strengthened with social Darwinism

and Eugenics movements throughout Europe and North America, only to be stigmatized at the end of WWII, as its contribution to the genocide of Jews became known. Although racist ideology was exposed with the Holocaust, it persists in new forms that remain grounded in key ideas constructed about race: white superiority, non-white inferiority, inherent racial differences and racial purity. Racist ideology continues to hold significant currency in how inequality is explained between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in colonized territories such as Saskatchewan, as will be described in the Part Three.

PART THREE

Racialization in Saskatchewan

In Part Three I identify three mainstream Saskatchewan strategic themes that claim to provide explanations and solutions for inequity between communities racialized as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. These strategies are reinforced by discourse that ignores racism as an ideology that authorizes and justifies inequitable access to power, while reproducing the historically constructed beliefs in race identified in Part Two. Because the strategies rely on beliefs historically constructed about race, the effectiveness is called into question. I begin Part Three with an examination of the historically constructed belief in Caucasian or White superiority as an underlying factor within the strategies I will discuss. I then examine how historical myths and the desire to 'let go of the past' contribute to normalizing white privilege The first strategy I identify relies on and is reinforced by the belief in non-white inferiority and surfaces in discourse that assumes Aboriginal peoples need support from the dominant population to be successful. The second strategy relies on the belief that racial characteristics are inherent and is located in discourse that connects cultural loss to inequitable socio-economic positions. The third strategy relies on beliefs in racial purity and contamination and underlies discourse that encourages the enhancement of 'race relations' to address inequality.

3.1 White Superiority

Racism is often associated with beliefs in non-white inferiority rather than white superiority, yet beliefs in non-white inferiority always give whiteness more meaning and value. As Dyer (1997) points out, "What the work of Morrison, Said *et al*. suggests is that white discourse implacably reduces the non-white subject to being a function of the white subject, not allowing her/him space or autonomy, permitting neither the recognition of similarities nor the acceptance of differences except as a means for knowing the white self" (p.13). It is often difficult to recognize white superiority and privilege in Saskatchewan because whiteness permeates practically every aspect of society and are assumed as 'earned.'

In prominent historical racial theories, the Caucasian race is always constructed as superior, as evident throughout the discussion in Part Two. However, since World War II, open beliefs in white superiority have become unpopular in the mainstream and consequently silenced in recent generations. Contemporary beliefs in white superiority are often institutionalized and hidden in common sense racism. For example, affluent businesses in Saskatoon do not have 'No Aboriginal' hiring policies nor do they purport to serve only non-Aboriginal clients. Yet, on any given day, an individual can visit one of these businesses and never see – or see only a small number of – visible Aboriginal people.

Saskatchewan citizens are inundated with messages, images and symbols of white superiority, which reinforce and are reinforced by white privilege. White privilege maintains economic, political, and social power and is often perceived as

'normal' rather than an artefact of the belief in white supremacy or superiority (Norquay, 1993; Frankenburg, 1993; MacIntosh, 1988; Thomas, 1994; Schick, 2000; Dyer, 1997; and Sleeter, 1993). In Saskatchewan, dominance is taken for granted by the majority of white people.

Notions of white superiority are partially maintained through national narratives often described as 'historical myths' that conceal oppressive colonial policy, glorify colonialism, and construct the oppressed as 'Other' (Said, 1978; Furniss, 1999; Francis, 1992; Morrison, 1990; and Deloria, 1998). Furniss labels one of Canada's historical myths as 'the frontier myth' and explains:

> The frontier myth is a historical epistemology consisting of a set of narratives, themes, metaphors, and symbols that has emerged within the context of North American colonization, that continues to define the dominant modes of historical consciousness among the general public, and that various individuals draw upon to construct understandings of identity, and of relationships with Aboriginal peoples. (p. 54)

Saskatchewan's historical myth largely entails the erroneous assumptions that the prairies were for the most part unoccupied and the 'Natives' were saved from their primitive lifestyles with the aid of paternalistic policies such as residential schools and reserves. Saskatchewan's historical myths perpetuate and normalize false ideas about white superiority and in turn rationalize the unjust occupation of Aboriginal land and oppression of Aboriginal people.

Historical myths that glorify the occupation of Saskatchewan also normalize capitalistic power structures that divide class by race (Armstrong and Ng, 2005). Inequitable distributions of power divided by 'race' are obvious when Canada is imagined as a country where non-white people hold the majority of power and

represent the 'norm.' But inequitable distributions of power divided by racialized identities, as they actually exist today, are most often invisible to the majority of Canadians. How a society is structured is a product of the worth and value it ascribes to its citizens. The worth and value ascribed to Canadian citizens reflects artificial divisions between human beings constructed in historical racial theories.

Ideas constructed as scientific fact in racial theories, such as the inherent intellectual inferiority of Aboriginal peoples, are often hidden in 'common sense' racist discourse. This discourse is often used to explain and provide solutions for inequality in Saskatchewan. Explanations and solutions for inequality that include blaming Aboriginal peoples for inequality are evidence of common sense racism. Other examples of common sense racism are justifications for historical and ongoing acts of colonialism, which are traditionally authorized by historical myths that normalize white privilege.

3.2 The Erasure of History

I have been told that Saskatchewan citizens need to 'get over the past' in personal and professional conversations in statements such as: '*They* need to *forget about* the past and move into the future,' 'Why can't *they let go* of the past?' and 'Jews are successful in spite of the Holocaust; why can't *they get over* the past?' These statements contribute to common sense racism primarily because they support the belief that Aboriginal peoples are responsible for their socio-economic positions in Saskatchewan because 'they' cannot let go of the past. Furthermore, the statements

diminish Saskatchewan's historical context and ongoing racist processes and practices as factors that lead to inequality.

It is important to address why it is inappropriate to compare the oppression of Aboriginal people to other racialized people in Canada with statements such as, 'The Jews got over the Holocaust, these people need to get over the past too.' A primary concern about this assertion is that it relies on the false assumption that Aboriginal and Jewish peoples are no longer oppressed or discriminated against. In Canada, assumptions that First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are no longer oppressed seems to lay the blame for the abject poverty of marginalized populations on the community members. The assumption reinforces the historically constructed belief that non-white people do not have the capacity to 'pull themselves out' of their primitive lifestyles. The argument assumes meritocracy works for everyone and dismisses the role racism plays in determining who has access to resources such as land, health care, education and employment.

Racist ideology works to maintain inequality and is often hidden in statements that compare the 'success rates' of racialized oppressed peoples. These comparisons pathologize victims of racism and simultaneously take attention away from the material and psychological privileges the dominant population gains as a result of racism. Furthermore, the comparison of Jewish and Aboriginal peoples in Canada ignores the very distinct and unique histories of each population and the obvious fact that Jewish people have never 'gotten over' or 'let go of' their history. In fact, the Holocaust has become memorialized in western history as a reminder of the danger of racism.

While the Holocaust is perceived as a crime against humanity to the majority of Canadian citizens, the settlement of Saskatchewan is celebrated as a Canadian accomplishment. Throughout Saskatchewan's short history of one hundred years the province has unsuccessfully tried to let go of its oppressive past through a 'collective forgetting.' Lerner (1997) explains:

> Civil wars and racist persecutions thrive on selective memory and collective forgetting.
> Herein lies the bloodiest proof that history matters.
> Just as the healing of personal trauma depends on facing up to what actually happened and on revisioning the past in a new light, so it is with groups of people, with nations. Germany's post-World War II recovery depended on its confrontation with its guilt for facism, Holocaust and war. (p.204)

Saskatchewan has yet to confront its guilt for racism and the marginalization and displacement of Aboriginal people as a collective.

Attempts to let go of the past always refer to historical events that are difficult to remember or cause guilt, anger, or discomfort. It seems that, in everyday discourse, a romanticized version of Saskatchewan's past is the only one the province is willing to remember. Lerner (1997) explains that these 'official versions' of history, which omit events perceived as immoral or unethical, benefit those who profit from the past:

> To those in power, history has always mattered. In fact, recorded history began as a means of celebrating the accomplishments of military chieftains, usurpers and kings…These stories of the brave and good deeds of powerful rulers serve both to legitimize power and to maintain it by establishing the official version of events as the dominant version. Beginning in the Renaissance, state governments continually used history as a tool for legitimizing power and for creating a common cultural tradition based on that history…The stories of the heroic deeds of ancestors supported the imperialist exploits of their 18th- and 19th-century heirs. (p. 202)

As Schick and St. Denis argue, “In popular imagery, Canada is constructed as generous and tolerant by ‘giving away’ land to white settlers” (2005).

The sentiment that Canada has a generous and tolerant history is exemplified in Saskatchewan’s centennial celebration motto, ‘One Hundred Years of Heart’ (Government of Saskatchewan, 2006). Saskatchewan’s provincial government celebrated the settlement of the province with a mass promotion that glorified and romanticized the beauty and history of the province. Although the campaign commemorated the challenges and obstacles settlers faced, the province’s history of and complicity with violence used to oppress Aboriginal peoples is, for the most part, dismissed. So too is the ideology used to justify violence against racialized populations such as First Nations and Métis. In fact, visible Aboriginal people, happily waving Saskatchewan flags, were used in television commercials to promote the centennial. But the dark side of experiencing racism as a visible Aboriginal person in Saskatchewan was omitted from the campaign. In this sense, the ongoing celebration of Saskatchewan’s centennial is one important way in which the settlement of the province is authorized through a selective forgetting.

As Lerner explains, to let go of or move on from the past means that the past has been acknowledged and is understood. In terms of understanding Saskatchewan’s history it is important to identify factors such as the *Indian Act* as important mechanisms in the settlement of Saskatchewan. Along with recognizing past oppressive historical practices and processes, the ideologies that authorized the practices and processes must also be acknowledged. The *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) (1996) identifies four areas of federal

policy and action that account for the dominance of non-Aboriginal (white) peoples in Canada: the *Indian Act*; residential schools; the relocation of entire Aboriginal communities; and the treatment of Aboriginal veterans. RCAP's authors explain that these policies and actions were justified by the assumption that Aboriginal peoples are inherently inferior – an ideology authorized by the historical construction of non-white inferiority in racial theories. Therefore, Saskatchewan's historical narratives that address the *Indian Act* but ignore the role racism played in the province's formation contribute to an historical myth that would be comparable to teaching students about the Holocaust without addressing anti-Semitism.

As highlighted in Part Two, the idea that Aboriginal peoples are inherently inferior is an effect of historical racial theories that categorized humans in hierarchical fashion and entrenched scientific beliefs that Aboriginal people are inherently primitive. Celebrations of 'historical myths,' such as peaceful prairie settlements, erase how the development of Saskatchewan was justified by ideology informed by historical racial theories. In fact, adherence to Social Darwinism or Eugenics is left out of most descriptions of historical figures, such as Tommy Douglas, who are remembered and revered for establishing Saskatchewan as a province (McLaren, 1990, p.8). McNeil (1999) explains that Social Darwinism formed the ideological argument to justify Canadian Indian regulations. He says, "There can be no doubt that the evolutionary theories of human societies prevalent in the later half of the 19th century influences government policy towards Indians in the United States and Canada" (p.72).

Nineteenth- and early twentith-century Canadian government legislation was produced at a time when the majority of the dominant population accepted the belief in the inherent inferiority of Indigenous peoples as scientific truth. Although Darwin challenged the idea of inherent inferiority, he no doubt described 'primitive peoples' as inferior to 'civilized' men. As highlighted in Part Two, Darwin described primitive people or lower races as intuitive, perceptive and imitative and argued that primitive people are incapable of controlling their habits, have an unconquerably strong taste for liquor, and have lower intellectual powers than civilized men. While much of this discourse survives today, Darwin's ideas, such as those in the *Descent of Man* (published in 1871, the same year the first of the numbered treaties was signed in the prairies), were historically used to justify the need to clear territory in the prairies for European settlement.

While the treaties *may have* been negotiated with good intentions between representatives of the Crown and First Nations, the *Indian Act* thoroughly undermined these intentions. The *Indian Act* was first passed in 1876 as a culmination of legislation designed by the federal government to regulate First Nations and excluded any input from First Nations. The *Indian Act* has undermined the intent of the treaties for over a century and regulated many aspects of the lives of Aboriginal people through factors such as residential schools, Indian agents, government structures on reserves, reserve allocation, the pass and permit system, definitions of Indians, prohibition of alcohol, enfranchisement and permission to practice traditional ceremonies amongst other restrictions[3].

[3] For a detailed description of each factor see the *Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996). 1 (2), Ch. 9.

Although oppressive policies such as the enforcement of residential schools no longer exist, there are pivotal laws and policies that remain intact within the *Indian Act* that make it difficult for Aboriginal people to obtain political and economic power. Furthermore, it is the federal department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) that continues to hold the majority of power in terms of implementing the *Indian Act* in First Nations. First Nations consulted by INAC are usually the Chief and council who do not always represent the voice of the community.

Because Métis and non-status First Nations do not have a land base allocated by the federal government the process towards self-government is an arduous process despite the regulatory absence of Indian Affairs. Access to land and resources remains a contentious issue within Canada because of the financial power corporations, businesses, and landowners stand to lose, as demonstrated in the Six Nations and Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug reserve land claims in Ontario (Rusk, 2006). In Saskatchewan, this is demonstrated in the exhausting Treaty Land Entitlement process amongst factors such as control over housing and water quality in First Nations.

I have often heard the assumption that to address racism, all that is required is knowledge of Canada's historical complicity with racist government policy and actions. Yet, even when Saskatchewan citizens are aware of the province's historical complicity with oppression and racism, they often continue to explain away present forms of inequality with phrases such as "Aboriginals need to let go of the past." Unfortunately, understanding the oppressive ideologies that authorized the settlement

of Saskatchewan does not always challenge individuals to identify ongoing racist assumptions about Aboriginal peoples. Contemporary conditions such as poverty are not only a result of historical injustices but also of present forms of oppressive practices, policies and processes, which are often authorized by current racist ideology informed by racial theories of the past. Before Saskatchewan citizens can get over the past, the racialization of First Nations and Métis peoples as inherently inferior must be adequately questioned, interrupted and transformed.

Historical events and knowledge, such as ideas constructed in racial theories, continue to influence and affect the discourse, perceptions and judgments of Saskatchewan citizens, making it difficult to 'get over' or 'let go' of the past, in spite of ongoing demands to do so. Paris (2000) explains why there is such a strong demand to try to forget about certain aspects of the past in nations that are complicit with historical acts of trauma:

> The demands for politically expedient solutions will always be present; for the sake of social harmony and perceived stability, responsible citizens are often expected to put away the past and never speak publicly about what happened or who was responsible. But seen through a long lens, peacemaking founded on "forgetting" appears to have a limited lifespan. (p. 464)

In colonized territories, letting go of the past has always included omitting the history of racial theories from curriculum that purports to be multi-cultural and inclusive (Willinsky, 1998). Hannaford (1996) points out the connection between racial theories of the past and contemporary racist ideology, discourse, practice, and processes. He explains, "No matter how strong the wish of anti-racists [who see racism as a natural phenomenon] to wind up the past, to extirpate the infection, to

find its essential cause, and of racists to mobilize its obvious power, it has to be recognized that the idea of race exercises a strong hold over both" (p.13).

The argument 'Aboriginals need to get over the past,' works to dismiss the impact of historical racial theories and ongoing forms of racism in Saskatchewan. This dismissal justifies the ongoing oppression of Aboriginal peoples and knowledge, maintains white power and assumes Saskatchewan citizens are all knowledgeable of the extensive historical occurrences that have led to inequitable power divisions in the province. This is not always the case and definitely not the norm.

While Saskatchewan citizens may want to let go of the past, they do not usually dismiss the fact that Aboriginal peoples typically occupy lower socio-economic positions than the rest of the Canadian population. Strategies to address issues such as Aboriginal poverty often center on three discourses that are commonly heard in Saskatchewan:

1. Aboriginal people need support and lack ambition. When Aboriginal people start to work harder and take advantage of programs designed to help them, they will no longer experience poverty.
2. Aboriginal people have lost their cultural identity. When Aboriginal people regain their culture they will be successful.
3. There are poor relationships between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. We must build positive race relations to address inequality.

These strategies are meant to address inequality and may not appear to be 'racist.' But the primary idea that legitimizes each argument is grounded in historical racial theories used to authorize and legitimate white supremacy. Because assumptions

about Caucasian superiority, non-Caucasian inferiority, inherent racial characteristics, and racial purity inform the strategies, the strategies do not address racism but perpetuate the racialization of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. The statements at the beginning of each section demonstrate the common sense ideas about race that play out in discourse that purports to support the strategy identified.

3.3 Aboriginal Intellectual Inferiority

Although phrases such as 'they cannot let go of the past' imply assumptions of intellectual weakness, the statements' strength, in terms of perpetuating racism, lie in the dismissal or erasure of Canada's historical and ongoing complicity with racist ideology. While historical acts of oppression cannot be disconnected from present forms of inequality, neither can the racist ideology that authorized the province's past. This ideology continues in discourse that produces Aboriginal people as inferior in everyday conversations heard throughout Saskatchewan.

The crux of the false belief in Aboriginal inferiority lies in the assumption that Aboriginal individuals possess an inferior intellect and/or capacity for rational thought in comparison to the settler population in Saskatchewan. The belief that Aboriginal peoples are inherently less intelligent than white people is grounded in historical racial theories but continues to surface in statements such as the following:

- *They are not capable of governing their own communities.*
- *They cannot cope in the mainstream.*
- *They do not work hard enough – they are lazy.*
- *They lack ambition.*

- *Where would they be without us?*
- *Indigenous knowledge is not 'real' knowledge.*
- *Our civilized society cannot benefit from their primitive culture.*
- *Aboriginal students should not be pressured to meet high academic standards of achievement.*
- *Their oral history is not real history.*
- *They cannot control their promiscuity or alcoholism.*
- *They are not good parents.*
- *They need to be educated.*

These statements, some of which I hear on a daily basis, are commonly used to describe Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. The descriptions signify the accepted racist assumption that Aboriginal people are intellectually and morally inferior in comparison to the successful white population. Had these statements been made during the settlement of Saskatchewan, when theories of race were accepted as scientific knowledge, it would be difficult to argue that the statements did not rely on racist assumptions. Yet these same statements, when made in contemporary Saskatchewan, are often not perceived as racist. Whereas similar statements made in the past could be justified with the accepted and overt belief in Aboriginal racial inferiority, today the statements are justified by other means. As mentioned in the thesis's introduction, justifications for racist ideology are constantly reinvented and always work to produce the dominant society as innocent (Razack, 1998).

The previous statements all rely on and reinforce the false belief that Aboriginal peoples are 'primitive' or unable to cope/succeed in civilized societies

without the assistance of the dominant population. As argued throughout the thesis, western discourse has traditionally produced the 'Other' as primitive, primarily through 'feminizing' the 'Other' with descriptors such as weak, irrational, emotional and imitative.

Descriptions of Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan as inherently inferior due to assumed low intelligence levels and the inability to live according to civilized laws continue to surface in discourse grounded in historical racial theories. These descriptions encourage a false sense of non-indigenous (not only white) entitlement to land, resources and control of Aboriginal livelihood and are supported by the myth of meritocracy. The erroneous idea that white people hold positions of power solely because they are ambitious and work hard reinforces the accusation that Aboriginals lack intellect and motivation; thus, they cannot compete with successful non-Aboriginals. Barriers such as racist assumptions and practices that restrict the ability to achieve and even define success are then ignored or denied.

Similar to Enlightenment ideology explored in Part One, Canadians are invested in beliefs in human equality. This investment necessitates explanations for why a disproportionate number of a specific population experiences low socio-economic positions. The belief in the inherent intellectual inferiority of Aboriginal people is frequently used as one of these explanations. Primarily, the belief in Aboriginal intellectual inferiority comes out in discourse that constructs First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan as constantly needing the assistance of the settler society.

The notion that Aboriginal people are unable to succeed in or make intellectual contributions to civilized societies without the aid of the settler population

is often use to explain inequality in Saskatchewan. For example, it is commonly believed that if Aboriginal people would take advantage of the multitude of programs designed 'for' them, poverty could be alleviated. Within this platform, attention often focuses on how to encourage Aboriginal individuals and communities to be healthy and contribute to society rather than on the racist climate that prevents access and success in society.

Common sense racism plays out in Saskatchewan public discourse that seeks to address the negative experiences of Aboriginal peoples but ignores the role racism plays in contributing to such conditions. For example, the *Criminal Intelligence Service Saskatchewan* (2005) report on Aboriginal youth and gangs states that, "In Saskatchewan, the "gangster" lifestyle is an attractive alternative for many aboriginal youth. The implications of extreme concentrations of poverty, violence, absent parenting and urban migration, combined with blocked opportunities and substance abuse have created an environment that is conducive for the recruitment of youth into gangs" (p.2). The report uses the term 'blocked opportunities' but does not *name* racism as a factor that encourages gang recruitment. The reader may be left to believe that if only Aboriginal people could take responsibility for issues such as poverty, violence, absent parenting and substance abuse, high gang membership rates could be addressed.

In the report, the idea that high gang membership rates could be the effects of racism and colonialism – just as with high rates of poverty, violence, and absentee parenting – is not presented. Furthermore, the report argues that gangs in Saskatchewan originated in Manitoba correctional centers, but does not provide

statistics that highlight or explain the over-representation of Aboriginal inmates in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Ignoring the role racism plays in contributing to these conditions reinforces the belief in Aboriginal intellectual inferiority and promotes the idea that Aboriginal people need assistance and support to be successful.

School Plus: A Vision for Children and Youth (Tymchak, 2001) is a Saskatchewan Education report prepared by the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit. The intention of the report is to promote community school initiatives in response to various socio-economic issues, such as poverty and the rising Aboriginal population – situations for which Saskatchewan schools and teachers are not perceived as adequately prepared to address.

Several statements in the report rely on common sense notions about Aboriginal people, which perpetuate beliefs in Aboriginal intellectual inferiority. For example, *School Plus* provides a vague description of residential schools and is laced with paternalistic ideology:

> Even when schools have been commandeered for darker purposes of social engineering, as the residential and industrial schools were employed in efforts to 'defeather' Indian children, the potential always existed for the strategy to undermine itself. Consider the number of Indian leaders who were products of the residential school but who used their learning to become eloquent spokespeople for 'Indian control of Indian Education,' and 'self-government.' (p.29)

This paragraph relies on the assumption that First Nations youth benefited from residential schools in ways they would not have had they been educated in their own communities. The statements also trivialize the negative intergenerational effects of residential schools. Furthermore, the paragraph suggests that residential schools provided First Nations students the ability to advocate for their rights but ignores the

original reasons why these individuals needed to advocate for control of their education and self-government.

Although *School Plus* does emphasize the fact that residential schools were implemented to 'defeather' or assimilate Aboriginal children, the report does not address the substandard education and abusive environment the schools provided. However, *School Plus* does provide several current statistics in Saskatchewan to demonstrate factors such as low Aboriginal student retention rates, high Aboriginal poverty rates and high Aboriginal youth suicide rates. But no connection is made between residential schools and the statistics provided. Furthermore, residential schools were not designed with the intent to enable authentic forms of assimilation for Aboriginal peoples into Canadian society (Ng, 1993; Carter, 1990; Buckley, 1992). Ng explains that the schools were racist because boys were trained to be farm labourers and girls were trained to be wage labourers. In this sense, the schools existed to create an underclass, a fact that *School Plus* does not address.

The previous *School Plus* statement also suggests that without the assistance of white people, First Nations peoples could not have articulated conceptions of self-government – a belief also reflected in the following statement:

> The 1970s and 1980s were decades of enormous significance for Indian and Métis people in Saskatchewan. They were the decades when the notions of nationhood and self-government came to the fore. The vanguard in these efforts of self-government was, and continues to be, participation in and control of their education system(s). (p.24)

No explanation is offered to explain why before the 1970s and 80s First Nations and Métis peoples did not have control of their education systems or why notions of nationhood and self-government had not been brought 'to the fore.' Readers of

School Plus may also be left with the impression that Métis and First Nations peoples may not have had 'notions' of nationhood and self-government until the 1970s and 80s.

Perhaps the most damaging statement made in *School Plus* in terms of producing Aboriginal people as inherently intellectually inferior comes from the following statement, "Whereas Aboriginal people played a central role in the fur trade, it could be argued that, in the later agricultural period, they became somewhat marginalized from the social mainstream" (p.24). This statement is problematic because it ignores the fact that Aboriginal peoples were systemically marginalized throughout Canada to protect the interests of white settlers. In addition, the statement perpetuates the assumption that Aboriginal people were unable to contribute to the economic growth of Canada beyond their ability to trap and hunt. This assumption reinforces the belief in Aboriginal intellectual inferiority due to the primitive rather than civilized abilities of Aboriginal people.

School Plus does call for anti-racist education initiatives in Saskatchewan. However, the fact that oppressive policies and laws such as those in the *Indian Act* are not mentioned in the report's historical context of the province suggests an uncritical acceptance of historical and contemporary institutional and systemic racism. Furthermore, there are times when the report reinforces the belief that Aboriginal people need the assistance of the settler population to survive and/or be successful. These ideas inform current strategies that seek to empower Aboriginal people through assistance and support, without challenging the racist climate in which Aboriginal people live.

3.4 Inherent Racial Characteristics

The belief that cultural deficiencies and/or differences can account for low socio-economic positioning of Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan is grounded in the belief that racial characteristics are inherent and passed down from generation to generation. The belief in inherent racial characteristics is reflected in the following types of statements:

- *They need to learn about their culture and be proud of their ancestry.*
- *We need to learn about their culture to avoid misunderstandings.*
- *They need to learn their language to have a sense of identity.*
- *They need to know their history.*
- *They need to learn how to live in both worlds.*
- *I took my class to Wanaskewin to teach my students about Aboriginal people – I should not have to do more.*
- *You are not a real First Nations/Métis person if you are not traditional*
- *You are an 'apple' (Aboriginal/red on the outside, non-Aboriginal/white on the inside)*

When cultural loss is used as explanation for inequality, there is little or no pressure to challenge and transform oppressive policies and practices. It is important to note that the terms racial and cultural are often used interchangeably as the two developed historically together. Robert Young (1995) explains:

> The interval that we assert between the past and ourselves may be much less than we assume. We may be more bound up with its categories than we like to think. Culture and race developed together, imbricated within each other: Their discontinuous forms of repetition suggest as Foucault puts it, 'how we have been trapped in our own history'. The nightmare of the ideologies and categories of racism continue to repeat upon the living. (p. 28)

Although culture is not inherent, there is a common assumption that culture is intrinsically linked to race and is biological. Racial categories were historically described as either 'civilized' or primitive' – each with their own set of cultural characteristics as demonstrated in Parts One and Two. In current Saskatchewan discourse, it is frequently argued that Aboriginal peoples suffer from poverty at a greater level than the rest of the provincial population because they have lost their culture. Essentialising culture as inherent is also used as a strategy to define who is authentic – who is traditional - and therefore worthy of access to land and resources.

Numerous indigenous scholars write about the importance of cultural revitalization as a strategy to resist the effects of colonization and its ongoing processes. Linda Smith (2001) describes the importance of cultural revitalization initiatives and projects in the advancement of Maori political protests. To the Maori, cultural revitalization revolves around key concepts such as sovereignty, extended family, language and cultural customs. She explains, "These concepts, which are embedded in the Maori language and worldview, provided a way of coming together on Maori terms" (p.109). In the context of Canada, Alfred (2005) argues, "The long process of strengthening ourselves begins with regenerating our indigenous intelligence so that we can begin to use our own conceptual framework to make choices as we move through the world" (p.199). To Alfred, this requires the

reconnection of indigenous peoples to their traditional cultural teachings. Both Smith and Alfred argue that cultural revitalization is a critical aspect in creating social justice from the grassroots. While cultural revitalization may strengthen and empower Indigenous communities, there are areas of contention within the argument that cultural loss is a cause of inequality.

When mainstream institutions adopt cultural awareness programs and integrate cultural diversity into programming as strategies to address social inequality, racism is often ignored or dismissed. Cultural loss and differences can then become the reason for inequality, as dominant groups believe the positioning of subordinate groups is a result of the group's inability to adapt to western cultural practices and worldviews. Culture then replaces race as an explanation for inequality.

McConaghy (2000) explains why focussing on culture can undermine authentic social justice movements because of the possibility of getting stuck in identity politics. She defines this phenomenon as *culturalism.* According to McConaghy,

> [Culturalism] is used to support both conservative and radical political projects and sustains seemingly oppositional strategies, such as assimilation and Indigenous self-determination alike. Culturalism is used variously to include or exclude. It is a concept which totalises social experience and homogenises subjectivities. It considers representation issues to be issues foremost and centrally of identities rather than rights or justice. (p.44)

McConaghy explains that culturalism is used to define who is an authentic member of a marginalized group. Assumptions about who is an authentic Aboriginal person in Canada, and then is entitled to specific rights, revolve around standards individuals must meet that are imposed by the government and/or Aboriginal communities.

McConaghy explains that culturalism stereotypes cultural identities; makes appeals to notions of 'tradition' as remote, past and exotic; and constructs the 'Other' as naturalised and normalized, amongst other descriptors (p.43).

St. Denis (2004) points out that a strategy of cultural revitalization also poses the potential to blame the victim when used as a means to address inequality. She explains, "A cultural discourse has assumed a level of sacredness and/or orthodoxy for explaining the social and educational conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada, so much so that other explanations for the on-going marginalization, exclusion, and oppression of Aboriginal people are denied and minimized" (p.45). She further argues that placing the onus on Indigenous peoples to create change through regaining culture and language after years of government and social oppression is unjust in itself. While regaining and reclaiming language, knowledge and ceremonial traditions as forms of culture can be empowering and is an inherent right of Indigenous peoples, it cannot restore healthy communities and address social injustice when oppressive policies and practices remain intact.

The argument that the inclusion of Indigenous beliefs, histories, knowledge, language and other aspects of culture into the mainstream will lead to social justice is unfounded for two reasons. First, to perceive Indigenous knowledge, histories, perspectives, and traditions as legitimate and valuable, racist ideologies must first be addressed. It is possible for the dominant society to be inclusive of Aboriginal cultural traditions, language, knowledge, perspectives and histories and still perceive this inclusion as inferior or primitive in comparison to mainstream 'civilized' culture and knowledge. Furthermore, the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and culture into

mainstream society will not necessarily or directly oppose oppressive policy and practice or create equitable access to land and resources. For example, it is possible to include Indigenous knowledge and culture into mainstream institutions without making institutional change that will lead to equitable hiring practices, or challenge non-Aboriginal assumptions about Aboriginal inferiority.

The inclusion of culture alone cannot address social inequality because those who hold power will not necessarily give it up simply because racialized groups identify with their traditional cultures. Lerner (1997) argues that despite the efforts of Jews to resist designations as inferior through various strategies, anti-Semites do not take these strategies into consideration while justifying anti-Semite ideology. Lerner argues, "The irony of these choices is that anti-Semitism would not recognize any difference between the separatist, the assimilated, [or] the acculturated Jew" (p.14). Racism, like anti-Semitism, is founded on false but accepted ideas produced by those who hold power over specific populations of people in order to create a *reason* for inequitable distributions of power. Therefore, it is impossible for those objectified by racist ideology to transform social inequality simply through participation in or regaining their cultural practices and beliefs. Without authentic forms of power, the oppressed can do little to dismantle the systems and ideologies that legitimize their oppression.

The belief that Aboriginal people endure poverty, high suicide rates and other forms of violence because of cultural loss is problematic. If this is the case, one must wonder why the multitude of immigrants who lost their cultural traditions when they settled in Saskatchewan do not endure similar socio-economic conditions.

Furthermore, the belief that Aboriginal peoples struggle because of cultural loss rather than oppressive practices and processes gives those who identify as non-Aboriginal (which does not only mean white) a sense of false superiority and entitlement to social, economic and political privilege in Saskatchewan. In this sense, privilege is normalized as a natural consequence of the effects of colonization and Aboriginal peoples are pathologized as 'lost' and 'without identity' because they 'lost their culture.'

That said, however, cultural revitalization can be very powerful for many people. But, as Saadawi (2000) argues, "We cannot understand the role which culture plays, or how it is or what it does, if we fail to link it to the power structure of the dynamics of gender and class, to rulers and people, to economic interests" (p. 1339). As St. Denis (2004) explains, "Cultural revitalization as a strategy to counter inequality actually encourages the minimizing of historical and contemporary effects of racial inequality in Canada. In some respects, a strategy of cultural revitalization encourages the denial of history and socio-cultural change" (p.41). Cultural revitalization does not necessarily challenge racism or false beliefs about race. Strategies that address inequality through teaching Aboriginal individuals about their culture cannot work towards social justice alone.

3.5 Racial Purity and Mixture

Although numerous 'original' or 'pure' racial categories were theorized in the nineteenth century, only two were required to authorize the imposition of patriarchal imperialist power structures in colonized territories: Caucasian and non-Caucasian.

In Saskatchewan this usually means White and Aboriginal. Saskatchewan citizens frequently rely on and reinforce the belief in racial purity. As discussed in Part Two the belief in racial purity was first constructed in historical racial theories. The idea that there are pure racial categories works to maintain clear economic divisions based on race and essentializes racial identities, as discussed in the previous section, as fixed and inherent. However, it is important to highlight the distinction between the idea that there are pure races and that racial characteristics are inherent because it is possible to use the ideas separately in racist ideology. Specifically, the belief in racial purity is not dependent upon the belief in the inherent nature of racial characteristics. It is possible to believe that there are pure, original races without believing these races pass on specific characteristics. The following statements are commonly heard in Saskatchewan and reproduce beliefs in racial purity and mixture:

- *We need to work on relations between races.*
- *Racism is natural when different races come into contact.*
- *Aboriginal history should be incorporated into Canadian history.*
- Whenever terms such as *Métis, mixed raced, multi-racial, half breed and hybrid* are used to describe people
- *We need to build bridges in the community between the different races*
- *You are not a real Métis person – you are too white or too brown*
- *You are an 'apple' (Aboriginal/red on the outside, non-Aboriginal/white on the inside)*
- Whenever individuals identify with or are designated a race with a race

Within the strategy to work on race relations is the assumption that race is real: that there are pure or distinct races, and that the races can presumably become mixed. Initiatives that stress the idea that different races of people need to build relationships rely on the belief in racial categories and reproduce beliefs in race, which serve no other purpose than to divide people according to skin colour. These strategies do not necessarily address the racist ideology that produces whiteness as superior, Aboriginal individuals as inferior, or acknowledge the relationship between power and racism. Nor do they recognize the wide variety of experiences and identities of people who may have the same skin colour.

For example, the City of Saskatoon's Race Relations and Cultural Diversity Committee's website homepage states:

> The City's Race Relations Program, which includes activities carried out by both the Race Relations Committee and Race Relations Office, is at a strategic point in its evolution. Engaging the Community in the development of a long-term Race Relations Plan is a necessary pre-requisite to any further decisions surrounding the Program including funding, the future role of the Advisory Committee, and the role of the City in promoting racial harmony and minimizing racial tension. (City of Saskatoon, 2006).

This statement, while it does address racism contrary to support and cultural inclusion discourse and practices, does not address the connection between racism and the power of the dominant society. The statement suggests that racism is caused because of racial conflict or difference and ethno-cultural diversity rather than oppressive

hegemonic racist ideologies that privilege white citizens in Saskatoon. Furthermore, the term 'race relations' insinuates that there are distinct or pure races, which upholds the historically constructed idea that some individuals are 'pure' while others remain 'mixed' and therefore contaminated. Beliefs in race always 'other' those who fit into two or more categories.

For the majority of the twentieth century in Canada, relationships between individuals who identified as racially different were discouraged. In fact, my grandparents were worried about how my brother and I would be treated before we were born when my mother decided to marry my father who is a Chinese/Métis. They were worried that my brother and I would face discrimination because we would be 'mixed.'

Although anti-miscegenation was not official policy in Canada, the Canadian social climate from at least the 1870s well into the twentieth century discouraged and has often persecuted 'mixed raced' unions (Backhouse, 1999, p.197). Historically, sexual regulations to keep Indigenous and European populations from reproducing were often justified by theories of hybridity as discussed in Part two. These regulations produced national identities and preserved the false belief in white supremacy. Stoler (2002), a post-colonial theorist who writes about the construction of race, class and gender in colonial contexts, explains, "Fears of physical contamination gave new credence to fears of political vulnerability. Whites had to guard their ranks, to increase their numbers, and to ensure that their members respected the biological and political boundaries on which their power was thought to rest" (p.64).

The belief in racial purity contributes to the production of Canadian national identities. Lee and Lutz (2005) explain:

> In all states, racist ideologies are deployed in forming the nation and nationalism and in constructing national identities. Great effort is deployed in managing cultural identity through discursive strategies, because the loyalty of the subject/citizen cannot be left to chance. (p.14)

The production of British and white European immigrants as 'Canadian' determined access and entitlement to economic and political privilege. As Mawani (2002) argues, "While determining who was Indian and who was white was important to the making of colonial identities, these constructions also had a material dimension: they specified who has access to land, citizenship and nation" (p. 49).

Public examples of how provincial racially pure identities are constructed in Saskatchewan are highlighted in Saskatoon's Western Development Museum and Wanaskewin Heritage Park. The language and images associated with each museum dismisses the fact that a large segment of the population can identify as both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Dyer (1997) explains that "Whiteness has been enormously, often terrifyingly effective in unifying coalitions of disparate groups of people" (p.19). In Saskatchewan, diverse European immigrants were unified through their racialization as 'white' citizens or 'real' Canadians as in the language of pioneers, homesteaders and settlers. This is exemplified in how white settlers are portrayed in the Western Development Museum as separate, unique and special in their ability to adapt to the prairies and utilize their intellect and motivation to create a civilized society.

The separation of Aboriginal and white populations as pure and distinct also occurs in the misrepresentation of Saskatchewan history. For example, when historical events such as the creation of the *Indian Act* and negotiation of treaties are labelled 'Aboriginal history' a tremendous injustice occurs in that the history often ignores how Canadian society continues to benefit from the policies. Furthermore, the belief that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories are separate and disconnected gives the false impression that Aboriginal peoples experience low socio-economic status as a result of their own shortcomings. The separation implies a lack of oppressive power relationships and is grounded in and perpetuates the belief that there are pure, separate races.

The idea that there are pure racial categories serves to preserve identities that are contingent upon imbalanced power structures and vice versa. In Saskatchewan these power structures remain largely colonial and therefore patriarchal. Without well-defined and racialized conceptions of who 'real' Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men and women are, justifications for power structures modeled on colonialism fall apart. Saadawi (2000) explains:

> The struggle over history, over identity and their origins is part of the struggle over power, which has never ceased throughout the centuries. It is those who possess military and nuclear and economic power, those who invade us and take away our material and cultural sustenance, those who rob us of our own riches and our labour and our history, who tell us what our identity is. Throughout the ages it has been like this. (p.1338)

The ability to identify individuals according to race, culture and other categories is a source of immense power. "It is important to remember identity is a discourse and it is essential to know who is using it, who decides, who labels me, what all this interest

in cultural identity means, where does it lead" (Saadawi, p.1329). Discourse that ascribes racial identities as pure or mixed has historically determined who has access to land, resources and political socio-economic power.

Young (1995) explains how ideas about racial purity remain constant in contemporary society:

> There is a historical stemma between the cultural concepts of our own day and those of the past from which we tend to assume that we have distanced ourselves. We restate and rehearse them covertly in the language and concepts that we use: every time a commentator uses the epithet 'full-blooded', for example, he or she repeats the distinction between those of pure and mixed race. (p.27)

Pressures to identify with a racial category and to avoid being 'mixed' remain pervasive in Saskatchewan. Racial membership to a pure racial category continues to hold benefits in terms of feeling a sense of belonging to a racialized community. Weiner-Mahfuz (2002) explains:

> Yet the presence and voices of mixed raced people are often deeply feared. We are feared because interracial relationships are still taboo in our culture. We are feared because our mere existence calls into question the status quo and the way that race is constructed in society. We are feared even by people on the 'left' who propose to be working to challenge these deeply rooted beliefs and constructs. We live in a white supremacist culture that banks on dichotomous thinking to keep people divided and fragmented within themselves. (p.37)

Racial categories give legitimacy to power structures and are perpetuated in Saskatchewan through the way we think and talk unknowingly about racial purity. The belief that inequality can be addressed through building bridges or improving race relations is problematic. The strategies rest on the assumption that there are distinct races that are in conflict and rarely address racism as an ideology that affects

everyone; yet plays out differently according to the identity, positioning, and experiences of individuals.

3.6 Conclusion

Ideas constructed in historical racial theories used to justify imperialism and the colonization of indigenous people across the globe, continue to influence the way citizens talk and write about inequality in Saskatchewan. Ideas such as white superiority, Aboriginal inferiority, inherent racial traits and racial purity and mixture have long since been dismissed by the mainstream as irrational and overtly racist but are reproduced and appear time and again in discourse normalized as common sense. Although this is difficult to prove, factors such as inadequate housing and contaminated water on reserves, school curriculum that glorifies colonization, the increase of Aboriginal youth involved in gangs, low Aboriginal student retention rates, the economic division of cities by race, cuts to federal funding for Aboriginal initiatives, the refusal to honour treaty rights and systemic discrimination throughout every Canadian institution (the list does not end) are preserved through the consent of Canadians who often rely on common sense racist ideology as explanations for inequality. When strategies designed to alleviate these problems rely on historically constructed ideas about race, the strategies have a limited success rate. Ideas about race were never meant to be emancipatory, but exist to divide and justify unjust abuses of power.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Research

The primary aim of this thesis was to provide evidence to support the claim that discourse used in current explanations and solutions for racial inequality in Saskatchewan is often grounded in historical racial theories. Because this discourse is not easily identifiable as racist, it becomes a form of common sense racism. The discourse often places blame on colonized peoples for the inequitable socio-economic and political positions they occupy and ignores white privilege. Key ideas constructed and solidified in historical racial theories that contribute to common sense racism in Saskatchewan include: white superiority, non-white inferiority, inherent racial differences and racial purity and contamination. These ideas continue to surface in Saskatchewan discourse.

To understand the history of race I began with a description of several significant historical ideological currents that led to the construction of race as scientific biological categories in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Elements of patriarchy, colonialism and imperialism, the Enlightenment and Christianity were discussed in terms of how significant ideas within each ideology contributed to the construction of racial categories and racial theories.

In Part Two, I described the construction of race, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century. I emphasize the constructed idea that humans can be classified by categories based on skin color and other physical characteristics and placed into a hierarchy. I also examined how Charles's Darwin's theory of evolution disrupted the belief in race as described by the majority of racial theorists at the end of the nineteenth century, in spite of his obvious sexist and racist beliefs. However, Social Darwinists and Eugenicists appropriated Darwin's ideas to support previous theories of race. Although the majority of scientists no longer believe in race, its use continues to surface in current academic studies and is reproduced in everyday public discourse.

In Part Three, key ideas identified in Part Two were highlighted and connected to current beliefs in race that are normalized as common sense in several strategies that attempt to empower Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. Underlying these explanations and solutions is the assumed belief in white superiority, which asks victims of racism to forget about or get over the past. I made connections between the beliefs that Aboriginal peoples are intellectually inferior, that racial groups have innate cultural traits, and that populations of people can be divided into pure racial groups that can become contaminated through racial mixture to current discourse and practices that attempt to work towards equality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Saskatchewan. A critical examination of the limits to these strategies was discussed.

Recommendations

So, what now? If support and assistance programs, cultural awareness and revitalization, and race-relations strategies are not enough to work towards justice and equality in Saskatchewan, what is left? I propose that Saskatchewan incorporates critical anti-racist education within every school, university, and public and private institution. Remnants of key ideas constructed about race continue to influence and inform discourse in Saskatchewan. This discourse perpetuates beliefs in white entitlement to power and Aboriginal inferiority. The discourse is hegemonic; it is not perceived as 'racist' but as common sense and often keeps even those who wish to work for social justice from recognizing how they have taken for granted assumptions about white superiority and Aboriginal inferiority.

To work towards a just society in Saskatchewan, the practices and processes that normalize inequality must be exposed, but to do this, Saskatchewan citizens must challenge themselves to recognize the ways in which they have internalized beliefs about race. Currently, there are few pedagogical opportunities that invite Saskatchewan citizens to engage in self-examination as a method to expose how individuals contribute to socio-economic inequality through racist practices and processes that are often left un-questioned. Programming designed to promote Aboriginal inclusion usually does not name, expose, and/or openly challenge racism. To make institutional systemic change, the ideologies that authorize and justify oppressive practices and processes must be questioned. We cannot expect to challenge inequality because we have taken an afternoon to think about racism or have listened to a one-dimensional history of Aboriginal people.

Anti-racist education is not an easy process and it is ongoing and lifelong. But the process is important. Human lives depend on the ability to challenge racism in local communities and across the planet. In Saskatchewan, being Aboriginal means experiencing racism in ways that others cannot imagine. Yet, Aboriginal people are not the only members of society who will benefit from anti-racist education.

Support programs, cultural inclusion, and improving race relations cannot address inequality completely, and may reinforce oppressive ideas about race. However, turning to anti-racist education does not mean that current strategies utilized to address inequality and empower Aboriginal people need to be abandoned. Rather, it is useful to accept that there are limitations to strategies that rely on beliefs constructed in historical racial theories. While it is almost impossible to avoid using constructed beliefs in race entirely, it is possible to deconstruct these ideas and to be critical of them, especially when they are utilized to address inequality.

Turning to anti-racist education should not be a difficult decision for those who believe in current practices and processes that promote support programs, cultural inclusion and developing relationships – that is, if the goal is to work towards equality. To me, the difficult part of anti-racist education comes from recognizing historically constructed ideas about race and current racist ideology, which we have all internalized. In Saskatchewan, we are inundated with messages everyday that it is better to be white than brown, it is better to be non-Aboriginal than Aboriginal. Confronting these messages when they emerge, from internal and external sources, is an important step towards authentic equality in the province.

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